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THE

LIFE, LETTERS, AND SPEECHES

OF

LORD PLUNKET.

THE

LIFE, LETTERS, AND SPEECHES

OF

LORD PLUNKET

BY HIS GRANDSON,

THE HON. DAVID PLUNKET.

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY PREFACE

BY LORD BROUGHAM.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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LIFE AND SPEECHES

OF

LORD PLUNKET.

CHAPTER I.

CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION—THE CATHOLIC BOARD—DEATH OF GRATTAN—LETTER FROM LORD GRENVILLE—BRITISH CATHOLICS' PETITION—IRISH CATHOLICS' PETITION—PLUNKET'S SPEECH—THE CATHOLIC RELIEF BILL—DR. MILLER—EMANCIPATION CARRIED IN THE COMMONS.

THE failure of Mr. Grattan's Bill in 1813 had proved a total and calamitous defeat to the Catholics, and for a time the doors of Parliament seemed closed against their complaints. A sense of national security returned on the conclusion of the peace in 1814, and that class of politicians whose ears were open to arguments based upon expediency, but deaf to those founded upon justice, relapsed into indifference on the question of emancipation. There was no longer reason

for apprehending that the discontent of the Irish Catholics might develope any consequences physically formidable to the empire; and a complete apathy regarding their claims settled down upon a large portion of the English people. The influence of these causes was clearly evidenced within the walls of Parliament. In 1814 the petitions of the Roman Catholics were merely presented, and no attempt was made to obtain a pledge from the House, even that they should be taken into consideration. In 1815 Sir Henry Parnell moved that the petitions should be referred to a committee, but was defeated by a majority of eighty-one. In 1816 Grattan introduced a measure of Catholic relief, and was defeated by only thirty-one—and from that year until 1819 the majorities against Catholic emancipation grew smaller each time the question was brought forward, until in 1819, Grattan was defeated by a majority of only two. Even in the Upper House, where the opposition to the Catholic claims was always much more inveterate than in the Lower, considerable progress had been made by the friends of emancipation, and a Protestant bishop was found amongst its advocates. William Bathurst, Bishop of Norwich, in the debate on Lord Donoughmore's motion in 1816 (June 21) took occasion to say, "It is the duty of every bishop,

as it is the criterion of an English bishop, to conciliate, not to divide, to allay, not to exasperate, religious differences; the only way to secure permanently the existence of any establishment, civil or ecclesiastical, is to evince liberal and conciliatory conduct to those who differ from us, and to lay its foundations in the love, affection, and esteem of all who come within its influence." Lord Donoughmore's motion was lost by four votes.

This gradual growth of a feeling favourable to political concessions to the Roman Catholics sprung in some degree from the more enlightened opinions of the public on such questions, but was immediately the result of the eloquence and sincerity with which the advocates of emancipation pressed its claims.

After the defeat of their measure in 1813, the Roman Catholics in England, and the most respectable portion of that creed in Ireland, persevered in a course of most conciliatory moderation, in advocating their claims to political concessions. But the great majority of the Irish Catholics, including many of their clergy and the humbler people, became very violent, and continually brought themselves into collision with the upper classes of their religion, and with the executive Government. In the end of 1813, the scheme of

Mr. Grattan's Bill (because it professed to concede the *Veto*) was repudiated by a majority of the Catholic board in Dublin. This produced a final split in its ranks, and the aristocratic party refused any longer to attend its meetings. The short and ignominious sequel of its history has been thus sketched by Mr. Wyse :—

In 1814 the Catholic board, deserted "by its natural leaders," as they ostentatiously called themselves, and left to the unmingled and uncontrolled sway of its own vicious free will, soon sunk into a noisy and discreditable debating club, dwindled away day after day, and at last, to the contempt of its adversaries, became an evidence only of the incorrigible propensity to feud and division which had so long disgraced the Catholic body. The sudden changes in foreign affairs considerably increased this depression. England was no longer awed by the apprehension of foreign invasion; Napoleon had fallen in 1814. And though a momentary gleam of hope seemed to have returned at the period of his escape from Elba, it fled with nearly the same rapidity with which it came. The Catholic board was now left to itself; with a hostile administration watching jealously all its movements, its forces diminished at home, its enemies augmented abroad, it found itself incapable of maintaining its position. It trailed on for a short period its feeble existence, now and then recalling to the recollection of the public, by the abrupt and impatient violence of its resolutions, some faint traces of its former importance—even that too soon passed away. It at last sunk into absolute insignificance by the gradual

secession of its few remaining members, and expired without a struggle and almost without a blow.*

Lord Whitworth's proclamation, by which the Catholic board was finally suppressed in 1814, was dated the 3rd of June; but just a month before, O'Connell's party, who may be called for the sake of distinction, "Anti-Vetoists," had received a more stunning blow from a quarter from whence it was little expected. On the 3rd of May, news arrived in Dublin that Monseigneur Quarantotti, President of the Propaganda, and then acting on behalf of His Holiness, had directed a letter to Dr. Poynter, as head of the Roman Catholic Church in England, advising in the name of the Holy Father, that the *Veto* should be conceded. This announcement created the strongest disgust, and the greatest confusion amongst the agitators; they at first tried to disbelieve the report altogether, and afterwards insisted that Quarantotti's rescript was opposed to the views of the Pope. This they failed, however, to prove, and in October, 1815, when an address on the subject, from the Irish Roman Catholics, was got up by O'Connell and forwarded to the Pontiff, it did not elicit any favourable answer.

After the suppression of the Catholic board in 1814, the language of the agitators in Dublin grew

* History of the Catholic Association, vol. i. p. 186.

more violent and abusive, but the organization and energies of their followers dwindled away. The executive as well as the legal powers of the Irish Government were vested almost entirely in the hands of Mr. Saurin, whose principles were those of the most exclusive Orange ascendancy. He ruled the Catholics with a strong but merciless severity. And while he succeeded to a great extent in gagging their champions in Dublin, their lower orders were driven on steadily towards political despair and actual revolt, so that in 1816 Mr. Peel demanded an additional force of 25,000 men, in order to keep down insurrection.

In those years (1815--1820) the agricultural population of Ireland felt most injuriously the evils of landlord absenteeism; and the oppressive and insulting system by which the tithes of the Protestant clergy were at that time collected also produced much discontent. But there can be no doubt that many of the Roman Catholic journalists and orators, lay and clerical, had largely contributed to the feelings of irritation and disaffection which spread continually through the whole body.

On the other hand it must be remembered that under the system then adopted by the Protestant Government of Ireland, all ranks of Roman Catholics were treated with equal suspicion and

contempt, and many respectable people were driven to associate themselves with persons with whom they had nothing in common, except the sympathy of the persecuted. Of course every instance of violence or disaffection exhibited on the part of the Roman Catholics, was used by their enemies as an additional argument in support of their own unwise system of Government.

In 1820, on the 4th of June, Grattan died. Ireland lost her most illustrious son, and the Catholics were deprived of a champion who, for twenty years in the Irish, and for fifteen years in the Imperial Parliament, had advocated their cause, clinging to it, as he said himself, "*with a desperate fidelity.*" In the following passages transcribed from the diary of Grattan's son, the reader will find one of the most striking scenes ever recorded by any biographer, and will learn the circumstances under which the conduct of the Catholic cause came into the hands of Mr. Plunket. I must premise that Mr. Grattan, though labouring under a mortal illness, had undertaken the journey from Dublin to London, then so arduous, in the hope that he might, before he died, once more bring the claims of the Catholics under the notice of Parliament. Before he arrived in London, he was informed by his doctors that mortification had actually set in, and that he had only a few days to live. He, how-

ever, pressed forward, hoping to accomplish his intention; but on arriving in London, he was immediately forced to take to his bed.

June 3rd.—He still persisted to go to the House. The Speaker having been consulted on the subject, said in the most obliging manner that he would give every facility, and that Mr. Grattan should have the use of his house and any apartments he desired. His second daughter (afterwards Mrs. Wake) requested him in the most earnest manner not to attempt it, and throwing her arms around him, said that the effort would cost him his life. On that he calmly replied, "*My life!* my love—God gave me talents to be of use to my country, and if I lose my life in her service, *it is a good death*," repeating it with emphasis, "*it is a good death.*" At length Crampton (whose kindness was excessive) and Tagart,* his old friend, dissuaded him from going.

Mr. Blake then called upon him. Mr. Grattan took him by the hand,—"Ah! Mr. Blake, I wish I could accomplish what I came over for; they tell me I am too weak, so that if I cannot speak for you, I must pray *you* will succeed: but keep clear of the Radicals and the Queen. How is Lord Wellesley? I hope he is well? We were old friends in our younger days; tell him I love him. How is the Duke of Norfolk? pray say how much I respect him." Mr. Blake said that Lord Wellesley would go to Ireland as Lord Lieutenant; at this Mr. Grattan was much pleased, and observed, "That prognosticates good." His old friend Sir John Doyle called, but he was unable to see him, and, being exhausted, sunk into sleep. In the mean-

* Tagart was a friend of Fox, and was at his bedside when he died.

time Lord Castlereagh called, and when Mr. Grattan awoke I told him of it, and that I had gone out to speak to him. On this he commenced a singular conversation, and with settled composure ended in the following manner:—"If you get into the House of Commons, I must beg of you not to attack Lord Castlereagh; the Union has passed. The business between him and me is over, and it is for the interests of Ireland that Lord Castlereagh should be Minister. I must again request of you not to attack him unless he attacks you, *and I make it my dying request.* As to the Union, you know the principle of my speech against Corry. The business being decided otherwise, I would not have recourse to publication; the fact was I found the Government in a league to sell the country; I told them so. I opposed them. *I stood up for Ireland: and I was right.*" Here his eye kindled, his countenance brightened, and he raised his arm as he uttered this with surprising firmness and spirit, then shortly after said,—"As to *my* person, I wish to be laid in Moyanna. I would rather be buried there." I told him that it was the intention to place him in Westminster Abbey. "Oh," said he, "that will not be thought of, I would rather have Moyanna." He was now so much enfeebled that it was clear he could not carry his intention into effect, or indeed survive much longer. He said, "This is a sad disappointment." 4th of June—Mr. Blake came with a message from the Duke of Sussex, that it was the wish of some of his friends that his remains should be taken to Westminster Abbey. Blake asked my opinion, and I told him Mr. Grattan's wish to be buried on the lands given to him by the people of Ireland. I then went to him and found all the family around him. At this moment he was so careful not to offend their feelings

that, when Mr. Blake made his communication, he begged the ladies might retire, and then said, "Well, Westminster Abbey." He then ordered me to get the paper which I had written for him on the Catholic question, and said, "Add to it these words, *I die with a love of liberty in my heart, and this declaration in favour of my country in my hand.*" He then said, "It will do. I should wish it to be read in the House; give my love to Plunket—he will do it." After this he grew very weak, got his family close around him, bowed down his head, and at six o'clock on the 4th of June he expired. That day forty years before, the volunteers of Ireland had presented to him an address for asserting the liberties of Ireland.

Nothing was done in the House of Commons in furtherance of Roman Catholic claims in 1820, as the public mind and Parliament were entirely occupied with the Queen's trial. Mr. Plunket does not seem to have taken an active part in that unfortunate business, or in the discussion which afterwards arose out of it; but in the beginning of 1821, he wrote to Lord Grenville asking his opinion and advice on the general politics of the day, and inquiring whether his attendance in Parliament would be required by his leader at the opening of the session. It seems that at one period during the ministerial crisis, which lasted all through the year 1820 and the earlier months of 1821, it was thought likely that Lord Grenville might be called upon to attempt the formation of a Ministry.

Private.]

Lord Grenville to Mr. Plunket.

MY DEAR SIR, *Dropmore, January 1st*, 1821.

I have this morning received your letter, and I lose no time in stating to you without reserve my own speculations on the different points to which it relates. I attach too high and too just a value to your friendship not to feel a high gratification in doing this at all times, and most especially in moments so perilous as the present.

Certainly if I viewed with uneasiness and apprehension the appearances of 1819, those with which 1820 has just closed are not calculated to tranquillise those feelings. This country is distracted by party violence daily increasing, and already carried to a height which I have never before witnessed. This state of things we are in no condition to support. We are slowly recovering from the effects of the late wars, as it were from a long and exhausting illness. By quiet and repose we might be re-established, but we are already unequal to these agitations and violences.

To moderate and calm them ought, I think, to be the aim of all peaceable and well-disposed men. And it is principally with this view that I look at the different questions likely to arise in the approaching session. With reference to the business of the Queen, whatever may be urged of the necessity on the one hand, or the impolicy on the other, of the proceedings against her, these are now closed, and cannot be renewed. Whatever therefore she can claim of right she must undeniably have. But her rights are either so inconsiderable, or so well established, that I know of no discussion likely to arise upon them.

The Parliamentary questions to be now expected on her subject are I suppose of these descriptions: 1st, criminations of the King or of the Ministers for the past; 2nd, discussions of the amount of the provision to be made for her establishment; or 3rd, motions to address the Crown for directing her name to be inserted in the Liturgy.

I consider the first only as fuel for keeping up the flame which I wish to see extinguished. I cannot condemn though I lament the institution of the inquiry, and though I think I now see considerable errors of judgment in its conduct, both here and abroad, I do not think them in any view fit objects of Parliamentary censure. And against all such attempts therefore my own wishes as a spectator, but certainly by no means an indifferent one, would be decidedly opposed. I see much evil that they must produce, and no imaginable good.

With respect to the second, this no doubt must be matter not of right but of discretion. Before the late proceedings commenced, the Queen was in the state of a wife separated from her husband by mutual consent; and this separation had, I believe, been distinctly recognized by the late King and indirectly by Parliament. When I had last the opportunity of hearing what is now intended, it was that her separate maintenance should be fixed at 50,000*l.*, being the amount to which she is entitled on the King's death. I think this ample, nor do I know that more will be contended for; if it is, Parliament must use its discretion, and from this view of the question I do not think that we can exclude the consideration of the Queen's conduct since her arrival here.

The third point, in itself so much the least important, is, strange to say, that on which it is likely that the greatest struggle will be made. It is now greatly to be

wished that it had never been raised. It might have passed in the first days of the reign as a matter of course, without, as I think, at all prejudging the subsequent inquiry. The matter is now in a very different state, and it is obvious that the King, whose act it must be, could not alter his course upon it without the greatest degree of personal degradation to which a man and a husband, much more a sovereign, could be subjected. This is no matter of right. It is not even matter of undeviating practice. The law recognizes that there is a *public authority* competent to determine from time to time, according to many possible variations of circumstances, in what terms the different members of the King's family shall be prayed for. This authority is clearly not that of the King in Parliament, because there would be no need of a statutory exception to save the exercise of the supreme authority of the legislature. It cannot therefore be pretended that it is any other than that of the King in council, the advice by which he exercises all other lawful prerogatives belonging to him as head of the church. And it has in fact been uniformly so exercised in every instance where occasion has required it, and to the effect even of omitting (as was, I believe, the case of the old Duke of Cumberland) those who before had actually been included in the prayer. Nor has the practice been uniform even in the case of the Queen—at least I am told that George the First's Queen was not prayed for by name, and though there might in that case be more or less reason for the decision than in the present, yet it does not appear that Parliament ever thought itself authorized to ask what the reason was.

The question therefore here is, not what Parliament shall do in a matter which (as in the question of allowance) falls within the necessary exercise of its ordinary

functions, but whether in consequence of an extreme though indisputable right of interposing its advice on every occasion in which *any* prerogative or function of the crown is to be exercised, it shall by an extraordinary interposition take into its own hands a matter in which above all others every feeling of respect and delicacy to the crown ought to prescribe a total silence.

This is my own serious and deliberate view of this question. I had much rather it were otherwise, because I believe very strong prejudices exist on the subject among the best and most loyal people, and because I think that if concession on this matter could properly be now recommended it would go far to tranquillize their minds and to afford the means of making a stand in other matters. But I cannot bring myself to think that, if I had the misfortune of being in any station in which I should have to advise on this subject, I could honestly recommend to the King to do what I think in his place I should not do, or least of all could I think it fit that such advice should proceed from one of the Houses of Parliament, who, as I have before said, are in no measure necessarily or even ordinarily called upon to deliberate at all on the subject.

With respect to the state of the parties by which we are now agitated, it is truly such as you see and describe it. Everything is to be feared from weakness on the one hand and from extreme and inconsiderate violence on the other. It was understood and announced some time since that Canning had withdrawn himself from the Government. It was said, and I know not with what truth, that Peel had been applied to for replacing him, and had, as one might naturally have expected, declined the offer. If he had accepted it I should have feared that the impression of that change would have been very

unfavourable with reference to the important question of which you speak. I wish I could say that my hopes were more sanguine as to that question than yours are. I see all the evil which new disappointment in that quarter must produce, and look to it as to a fresh very great danger impending over us.

What you are so good as to say with regard to myself personally could not fail to be most truly gratifying to me, but I should have been unpardonable if I had listened to any proposal of undertaking duties which I am quite certain I am incompetent to discharge. My health is wholly unequal to them; the failure as it respects myself would be nothing but to myself, but as it relates to the public interests, in such a moment I should be inexcusable if I subjected them to such a hazard.

With respect to what you ask as to Parliamentary attendance, especially at the opening of the session, I hardly know what to advise, unless one had a more distinct view of what is likely to arise in the first instance than one can have in this unsettled state of things. And undoubtedly your decision must in a very great degree be governed by your own view on the matters which I have thus freely though I fear tediously discussed.

Undoubtedly there can be no case in which your talents and authority would not have the greatest use and weight, but I find it difficult to say that I foresee any special occasion which at the sacrifice of so much of personal convenience should call for your attendance on the first day.

The report which I heard yesterday was that Canning had withdrawn his resignation, possibly from seeing the extreme difficulty which the Ministers seem to have either

in replacing him or in carrying on the Government without him. But of their intentions in this respect I know absolutely nothing. You may probably have seen in the papers amongst the thousand idle rumours in which these times are so fertile that my nephew Charles Wynn had amongst others been applied to to accept that office. Nothing of the sort has passed—if it had I need hardly say to you that (at least so I am persuaded) the offer would have been declined; and need I say that he would have been most anxious to communicate with you immediately on the subject if anything of the sort had occurred.

Believe me ever, my dear Sir,
With the greatest truth,
Most faithfully yours,
GRENVILLE.

Soon after the opening of Parliament in the year 1821, the friends of the Roman Catholic cause collected their forces, and made arrangements for a great effort. Their prospects seemed brighter than they had been since 1813; and though they had lost the great assistance of Grattan's advocacy, the influence of his great character, already almost canonized, spoke eloquently from his grave. On the 28th of February, 1821, Plunket, as their advocate, delivered in the House of Commons a speech, of which Sir Robert Peel afterwards said,—"It stands nearly the highest in point of ability of any ever heard in this House; combining the rarest powers of

eloquence with the strongest powers of reasoning."*

On this occasion (February 28th) Lord Nugent presented to the House of Commons the petition of the British Catholics. He observed that it was signed by 8,000 persons—that among them were seven peers, fourteen baronets, seven of their own bishops, and a considerable body of their own clergy. He remarked that there were but four baronies remaining which had belonged to barons who signed Magna Charta; and that the representative of all the four, the Duke of Norfolk, had added his name to the petition then presented to the House.

He stated that the oath of supremacy was the main obstacle to the admission of Roman Catholics to the same privileges as those which were enjoyed by their fellow-subjects; the declarations against transubstantiation, and the invocation of the saints, being subsidiary to it; that the belief of the supremacy of the Pope was the only distinctive tenet of the Catholics which was supposed to carry with it any real danger to the State, and on that account to justify the continuance of the penal code. But all belief of the supremacy, either temporal or ecclesiastical, of the Pope, so far as

* Debate, June 13, 1844.

it invested him with civil power, or with a right to interfere with civil concerns, was now disclaimed by the petitioners, and by the Catholic body at large.

He shortly suggested some other topics, which should recommend the petition to the attention of the House, and obtain for it a favourable hearing. He finally moved that the petition should be brought up. Mr. Plunket then rose and said :—

Sir, I hold in my hand a petition, signed by a very considerable number of his Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects of Ireland. From the names attached to it, which amount to many thousands, distinguished for rank, fortune, talents, and everything which can confer weight and influence,—from the means which these persons possess of collecting the opinions of the people in that part of the United Kingdom,—the petition may be fairly considered as speaking the sentiments of the great body of the Roman Catholics of Ireland.

A similar petition was presented, from the same body, in the year before last. It is unnecessary for me to remind the House that on that occasion it was presented by the late Mr. Grattan. It was sanctioned by the authority of his name, and enforced by all the resistless powers which waited on the majesty of his genius. I have no design to give vent to the feelings with which my heart is filled, or to mingle with the public mourning the mere peculiar and selfish regrets which have followed to the grave the friend by whose confidence I was honoured, by whose wisdom I was instructed, by whose example I was guided. His eulogium has been heard from the lips of kindred eloquence and genius. The last duties have been rendered to his tomb by the gra-

titude and justice of the British people. In his death, as in his life, he has been a bond of connexion between the countries.

I will not weaken the force of that eulogium, or disturb the solemnity of those obsequies, by my feeble praise, or unavailing sorrow; but with respect to the sentiments of that great and good man on this particular question, I wish to say a word. Sir, he had meditated upon it deeply and earnestly—it had taken early and entire possession of his mind, and held it to the last. He would willingly have closed his career of glory in the act of asserting within these walls the liberties of his countrymen; for he ever regarded them as connected with the strength, the concord, and the security of the empire. Sir, he was alive to fame—to the fame that follows virtue. The love of it clung to him to the last moments of his life; but though he felt that "last infirmity of noble minds," never did there breathe a human being who had a more lofty disdain for the shallow and treacherous popularity which is to be courted by subserviency, and purchased at the expense of principle and duty. He felt that this question was not to be carried as the triumph of a party or of a sect, but to be pursued as a great measure of public good, in which all were bound to forego their prejudices, and to humble their passions for the attainment of justice and of peace.

In the humble walk, and at the immeasurable distance at which it is my lot to follow the footsteps of my illustrious friend, I pledge myself to be governed by the same spirit. I have a firm and entire persuasion, that justice and policy require that the prayer of this petition should be complied with; but I am equally convinced, that if this question is pressed, or carried on any other terms but such as will give full satisfaction to the Pro-

testant mind, it cannot be productive of good. All these objects appear to me to be attainable; with this view, and in this temper only will I prosecute them.

Mr. Plunket then moved that the petition should be brought up.

Mr. Denis Browne seconded the motion. The petition was brought up, read, and ordered to be printed.

Petitions to the same effect, from the Roman Catholic inhabitants of several parishes in the city of Dublin, and from those of the county and city of Waterford, were brought up by Mr. Plunket, read, and ordered to be printed; after which Mr. Plunket, having resumed his place, spoke in substance as follows:—

Sir, having presented the petitions confided to me by so respectable portions of the Roman Catholics of the empire, it now remains for me to discharge my duty as a member of this House, by bringing forward a motion founded on their prayer, and calculated for their relief. I desire to be considered as applying, not on the part of the Roman Catholics, praying to be relieved from the pressure of a grievance; but, as a member of the Legislature, on behalf of Protestants and Roman Catholics both. I require of this House to take into their consideration, earnestly and immediately, the relative situation of both; a situation which, on the one side, involves the charge of harshness and injustice; which excites on the other a sense of injury and oppression, and which, in its consequences, must be degrading and

dangerous, as well to the party which inflicts as to the party which suffers. My primary object, therefore, is to arrive at public good by doing an act of public justice. I am sure that if it is an act of justice, it will be the foundation of ultimate concord. I believe besides, that it will be productive of a high degree of immediate satisfaction, and will be followed by a warm feeling of gratitude.

But these are advantages secondary and inferior, although certainly desirable, and not to be left out of the account. To suppose that the allaying of present discontent is the principal object of the measure which I have the honour to bring forward, is utterly to undervalue its importance, and to misconceive its bearing. Sir, the Roman Catholics of both countries have nobly disentitled themselves to such a topic. On their part, I am bold to say, that determined as they are never to abandon their claims on the justice and on the wisdom of Parliament, their resolution is equally fixed to await, with patience and confidence, the result of that wisdom and justice in which they know they cannot be finally disappointed. That there does exist an anxious and eager desire in that body to share in the rights of Englishmen, I should be ashamed, for them, to deny. That there may grow a sickness of hope deferred, for what ought to be administered to them, I will not attempt to conceal. Neither am I so sanguine as to think, or so silly as to assert, that the adoption of any measure which can be proposed to Parliament, will have the effect of allaying at once every unpleasant feeling which a long course of unwise policy may have produced. I do not entertain the childish expectation that concession will operate as a charm, and that at the very moment in which the storm has ceased to blow, the waves will subside and the murmurs will be hushed; but I feel convinced that

agitation cannot be formidable or lasting, and that in rendering justice we must obtain security.

And, sir, these are not the questions of statesmen. Our duty is to inquire whether injustice is offered to our fellow-subjects, and if so, to atone for it; whether grievances press on them at which they have reason to be dissatisfied, and if so, to remove them; whether injurious distinctions exist, and if so, to obliterate them. If these things excite discontent, the more our shame to suffer injustice, and grievances, and injurious distinctions to remain, and the more imperious the call on every honourable mind to do them away.

I desire, therefore, in the outset, to have it distinctly understood, that my object is not to apply a palliative to temporary or accidental humours. I call on the deliberate wisdom of this House to look at things, and into their cause. If they find any institution pressing heavily and unnecessarily on the rights and feelings of any portion of the subjects, they know that it must ultimately generate discontent; that the longer it is continued, the deeper that discontent must sink into the hearts of the aggrieved parties. And if, sir, these grievances bear not on individuals, or on small classes, but on the great mass of the people, in one of the most important portions of the empire, the House must feel that not a moment should be lost in averting the evils which must grow from a state of society so alarming and unnatural. Admitting, then, that this great measure is exposed to the lot of all human measures for the happiness of human beings; that the unreasonable will not be convinced; that those who wish for war, will not rejoice in peace; that the bigots in politics and in religion will remain true to their bigotry and blind to their interests; still, I say, you do your duty as legislators, and doubt not that they

will do their duty as subjects. The lasting fruit of honest government is lawful obedience, as certainly as insubordination and resistance grow from insolence and injustice.

Before I enter on the considerations which appear properly and necessarily to belong to the subject, I beg leave, sir, to deprecate a mode of dealing with it which has been uniformly, and, I fear, not unsuccessfully resorted to; I mean the argument that our plan is not perfect; that there are incongruities in the detail; that some of the offices which we propose to open are as dangerous as some of those which we propose to keep closed; that some of the oaths which we propose to retain are unwise and affrontful as those which we desire to abrogate; that we are not all agreed as to the conditions which we would impose, or as to the necessity of at all imposing them.

Sir, this appears to me to be neither a fair nor a manly mode of meeting the question.

If the measure, in any shape or form, is altogether inadmissible, be it so: show this, and there is an end of it.

But, be it good, or be it bad, no man can doubt that it is a question of deep and vital importance. Does justice require it? Does the constitution admit of it? Does policy allow it? All these are fair and open questions, and must be met. But if, without impeaching it on these solid and substantial grounds, you content yourselves with saying, that the particular measure is not well matured, or that there are inconsistencies in the detail, or that the proposed arrangements are not clear or accurate; these, I say, are considerations to excite every man, who feels an interest in the public good, to come at once to the discussion, to join his labours in reconciling the difficulties, and in rounding the arrangements. But it is neither a manly, a patriotic, nor, give

me leave to say, an honest part, to condemn the principle because the plan is weak. To him who says that the principle of concession is, in itself, radically vicious, I have no other answer than to join issue on its soundness. But to him who admits that the matter is of deep and earnest interest, but who, without saying whether it ought or ought not to be effected, demurs to its consideration because he sees imperfections in the means proposed, I have a right to answer, where is your privilege for neutrality or indifference in that which concerns you as much as me, because it involves the best interests of your country? If your objection grows solely from the difficulty, assist me in getting rid of the difficulty; help me to clear up what is obscure, to reconcile what appears inconsistent, to facilitate what appears difficult to reduce to practice; join with me in removing the obstacles to that which, if it is not public evil, is public good.

Sir, this is not a question on which any party has a right to lurch and practise stratagems, and take advantage. If it be not utterly inadmissible, the State has a claim on every man who feels that he has that within him which is capable of rendering public service, to join in the consideration of this question as its friend and auxiliary. These claims are not to be encountered as an invading enemy, or avoided by device and stratagem. We come forward with no innovation on ancient practice, with no attack on constituted authority, no quarrel with existing establishments, no storming of the strongholds of the constitution, no theoretical experiment for new rights, no resting on unvouched professions; but an unanimous body, consisting of millions of the king's liege subjects, come before Parliament, humbly and peaceably, men whose undeviating loyalty stands re-

corded on your journals and your statute books; they come forward petitioning to be admitted to the privileges enjoyed by their ancestors, in order that they and their posterity may enjoy and exercise them, in cordial support of all the establishments, of all the lawful authorities of the State, according to the well-known principles, and the sound, tried, practical doctrines of the constitution.

Sir, such claims are entitled to an honourable meeting. Let them be put down by reason and by truth; but, if that cannot be done, every able and honest man is bound to assist me in the details which are necessary (and most difficult I admit them to be) for carrying them into effect.

I really do not apprehend that I have to encounter any feeling of hostility in this House. I am sure no man wishes that the plan of conciliation should be impossible. That there cannot be discovered such a plan, I believe no man has sufficient grounds for asserting; I have some confidence in expressing the hope and opinion that there may, because I know that, within the last few years, nearly a majority of this House was of opinion in favour of a specific plan, of which admission to Parliament formed a part; and had it not been for the indiscretion of some of those who fancied they were friends to the Roman Catholics, that measure would then have probably been carried.

Sir, at that time the empire was reeling to its centre under the heaviest tempest that ever was weathered by a great nation. I will not believe that any person who, in that hour of danger and dismay, yielded his assent to the desires of the Roman Catholics, will now be disposed to retract it. It will not easily be forgotten that, proud and noble as the exertions of the whole British people

have been in bringing that contest to a triumphant issue, no portion of them have been more distinguished than the Roman Catholics. They have shed their blood in defence of our laws and liberties, with a prodigality of self-devotion which proves them worthy to share in them. This House and this country, I trust, have not hot and cold fits; and I know that the question will now receive an attention as anxious and favourable as if the enemy were pressing to land upon our shore, and our hopes of immediate safety rested on the cordial union of every portion of our people.

Whatever difference of opinion exists on this subject, there is little of hostility, nothing of rancour. Prejudices, I must say, I believe there are; but when I call them so, I acknowledge them to be derived from an origin so noble, and to be associated with feelings so connected with the times when our civil and religious liberties were established, that they are entitled to a better name; and I am confident that they are accessible to reason and open to conviction, if met by the fair force of argument without rudeness and violence. Sir, it is impossible to mistake the feeling of the House and of the enlightened part of the country on this subject, or to doubt that it is a growing one.

The liberal and gentleman-like temper in which the question has been discussed, is in itself of the highest value; not merely from the hope it holds out that the cause, if just, must ultimately prevail, but from the soothing influence with which it gains on the minds of our fellow-subjects. With respect to the Roman Catholics of Ireland, I am satisfied that the tone in which the rejection of their claims has of late years been uttered, has considerably softened their disappointment at that rejection; and I do not think I injure the

interests of my countrymen, when I say that the character of fair and liberal discussion with which the question has been met in the united Parliament, the absence of invidious party feeling, the freedom from bigotry, the forbearance and moderation which has generally marked the opinions and governed the language of the opponents of the measure, has done more to conciliate their minds than many of the concessions which had formerly been made; yielded, as they too generally were, with grudge and reluctance, and accompanied by reproachful charges and degrading insinuations.

And now, sir, I shall proceed, without further preface, to the main argument. The question presents itself in three distinct points of view; as a question of religion; as a question of constitutional principle, and as a question of policy and expediency, in reference to the stability of our existing establishments.

On the first topic it is not necessary that I should say much. I am led to advert to it, not so much from the bearing that the application of the religious principle to civil rights has upon the argument as it regards the Roman Catholics, as from a feeling of the serious injury which it is calculated to work to the cause of Christianity. As an argument affecting the Roman Catholics, merely as such, it has of late been altogether abandoned. So far the cause of religion and of truth is much indebted to a right reverend prelate* of the Established Church, to whom I shall presently have occasion more particularly to allude. He has fairly acknowledged (and no one of the right reverend bench, in whose presence he made the acknowledgment, disavowed his sentiments), that the profession of the Roman Catholic religion,

* The Right Rev. Herbert Marsh, Bishop of Peterborough.

merely as a religious opinion, or otherwise than as affording an inference of a want of civil worth, was not properly the subject of any political disability. Perhaps, therefore, so far as the present measure is concerned, I might safely dismiss the further consideration of this topic; but on my own behalf, and on behalf of all the members of this House, who are obliged to make the declaration now required by law, I hope I shall be excused if I make a few observations.

In the first place, it appears obvious that the requiring a religious pledge to the State, as a qualification for civil rights, makes religion an affair of State; because you cannot lay it down as a rule to be applied only in a case of true religion; for every religion is the true one in the opinion of its own professors; and therefore, if the position is true in our instance, it must be equally true that, in every State, Protestant or Catholic, Christian or Pagan, the interests of true religion require a pledge to the State that the person admitted to its privileges is of the religion of that State. All this leads to the unavoidable inference that, in the opinion of those who so argue, there is no truth in any religion, and no criterion other than its adoption by the State. I do not say that such a principle may not be taken on trust by an honest man, and hotly insisted on by him, if he happens to be a zealous man, but I say it cannot be deliberately and rationally maintained by any person who believes that there is any absolute truth in any religion.

Again, if religion is to be an affair of State, why not require some positive profession of faith as a qualification? Such as that he is a Christian, or that he believes in God, or in a future state, or that he has an immortal soul? Why does the declaration sound only in horror, and antipathy, and denunciation of another religion?

If the law is to be put into a state of electricity by the Church, why not of positive electricity?

Again; if we are to denounce, why denounce only one particular sect of Christians? Why not Socinians? Why not those who deny the divine nature of our Lord? Why select those who believe all that we do, merely because they believe something more? Why not Jews, Mahometans, Pagans? Any one of these may safely make the declaration, provided he is willing to commit the breach of good manners which it requires. He may not only deny our God and our Redeemer, but he may worship Jupiter or Osiris, an ape or a crocodile, the host of heaven or the creeping things of the earth; let him only have a statutable horror of the religion of others, and agree to brand with the name of idolatry the religion of the great part of the Christian world. But further, if the Roman Catholic religion is to be singled out as that, by the common bond of hatred to which we are all to be united in the ties of brotherly love and Christian charity, why select only one particular article of their faith, and say that the sacrifice of the mass is impious and idolatrous? Why leave them their seven sacraments, their auricular confession, their purgatory, all equally badges of superstition, evidences of contumacy and causes of schism? Why make war exclusively upon this one article? We all declare solemnly that we consider the sacrifice of the mass as superstitious and idolatrous. Now I entreat each member of this House to suppose that I am asking him individually, and as a private gentleman, does he know what is said, or meant, or done in the sacrifice of the mass; or how it differs from our own mode of celebrating the communion, so as to render it superstitious and idolatrous? If I could count upon the vote of

every member, who must answer me that upon his honour he does not know, I should be sure of carrying, by an overwhelming majority, this or any other question I might think it proper to propose. Were I now to enter on a discussion of the nature of these doctrines, every member would complain that I was occupying the time of statesmen with subjects utterly unconnected with the business of the House or the policy of the country. Can there be a more decisive proof of its unsuitableness as a test?

Still, even at the hazard of being censured for my irrelevancy, I must venture one or two observations on the point denounced. It is important that I should do so, because the truth is that at the Reformation the difference between the two churches on this point was considered so slight and so capable of adjustment, that it was purposely left open. Our communion service was so framed as to admit the Roman Catholics, and they, accordingly, for the first twelve years of Elizabeth's reign, partook of our communion, and there is nothing to prevent a conscientious Roman Catholic doing so at this day. The sacrament of our Lord's Supper is, by all Christians, held to be a solemn rite of the Church, ordained by its divine founder as a commemoration of his sacrifice, and most efficacious to those who worthily receive it with proper sentiments of gratitude and contrition; so far, all Christians agree, and we are on the grounds of Scripture and of common sense; but beyond this the Roman Catholic is said to assert that the body of our Lord is actually present in the sacrifice. Now this, in the only sense in which I can affix a meaning to it, I must disbelieve. It is contrary to the evidence of my senses and to the first principles of my reason. But the Roman Catholic states that he does not believe the

body of our Lord to be present in the Eucharist, in the same sense in which it is said to be in heaven; for he admits that the same body cannot be in two places at the same time, but it is present in a sense; the council of Lateran says sacramentally present. Now what this sense is I own baffles my faculties. The proposition which states it I can neither affirm nor deny, because I cannot understand it, any more than if it was laid down as a dogma that it was of a blue colour, or six feet high. I feel satisfied, as a sincere Christian, resting on Scripture and reason, that it is not necessary for me to involve myself in these mysteries; and of this I am sure that I should act a very unchristian as well as a very ungentleman-like part, if I were to join in giving foul names to the professors of this, to me, incomprehensible dogma.

Whether it be a fit subject for polemical controversy I will not pretend to say. Queen Elizabeth certainly thought it was not, and forbade her divines to preach concerning it; and they thought her judgment too good on such points not to render an implicit obedience to her commands. I will beg leave, sir, to read a short extract from Burnet's *History of the Reformation*, bearing on this point:—"The chief design of the queen's council was to unite the nation in one faith, and the greatest part of the nation continued to believe such a presence (the Real Presence), therefore it was recommended to the divines to see that there should be no express definition made against it; that so it might be as a speculative opinion, not determined, in which every man was left to the freedom of his own mind." Such were the opinions of Queen Elizabeth, the founder of the Reformation. Perhaps no monarch ever swayed the British sceptre who had so profound an acquaintance

with the royal art of governing. To the Protestant religion, certainly, no monarch ever was more sincerely and enthusiastically attached. On the truth of these opinions she hazarded her throne and life. But she respected the opinions and the sincerity of others, and refused to make windows to look into the hearts of her subjects. She, Queen Elizabeth, the founder of the Reformation, altered the Liturgy, as it had been framed in the reign of Edward the Sixth, striking out all the passages which denied the doctrine of the Real Presence; and this for the avowed purpose of enabling the Roman Catholics to join in communion with the Church of England; and am I to be told that this was done in order to let in idolaters to partake of, and to pollute our sacrament? But it seems some of the divines of our day are better Protestants than Queen Elizabeth. If she were alive again I should be curious to see them tell her so. Indeed, sir, these things are calculated to injure the cause of true religion. The Christian is a meek and well-mannered religion, not a religion of scolding and contentious reviling; it is an outrage on that religion and a dangerous attack upon its evidences, to say that the mission of its divine founder has hitherto served only to establish superstition and idolatry among mankind; and that, except for a favoured few, his blood has been shed in vain. In whatever point of view we turn this question, the absurdities increase upon us. We have legalized their religion and the sacrifice of the mass; and if that is idolatrous, the King, Lords, and Commons are promoters of idolatry. By the 31st of the late King, we require the party claiming certain privileges to swear that he is an idolater. By the same Act we excuse him from coming to our church only on condition of his going to mass; that is, we inflict on him penalties which

are to be remitted on the express terms of his committing an act of idolatry. By the same Act we inflict penalties on any person who disturbs him in the exercise of his idolatry. In Ireland, we admit him to the magistracy, and to administer the laws of a Christian country, requiring from him, as a preliminary condition, his oath that he is an idolater. When we reflect on all this, and remember that we have established their religion in Canada, and that we are in close alliance, for the purpose of protecting religion and morals, with great nations professing the Roman Catholic religion, is it not obvious that the perseverance in such a declaration is calculated to bring our religion and our character into contempt, and to make thinking men doubt the sincerity of our professions? Whatever may be the fate of the other part of this question, I cannot bring myself to believe that this outrage upon the religious decencies of the country will be suffered to remain on our statute-book.

Sir, I shall now proceed to the consideration of the question, so far as it involves the objection derived from the supposed existence of certain principles of the constitution, inconsistent with the claims of the Roman Catholics. I shall endeavour to show that the exclusion of the Roman Catholics from franchise and from office, is repugnant to the ascertained principles of our free monarchy; that these principles existed before the Reformation, and were coëval with the first foundation of our constitution; that they were not touched at the Reformation, or at the Revolution, or at either of the unions; that the restriction or suspension of them grew out of temporary causes; that they were so declared and acknowledged at the time; that, when well considered, they offered a confirmation of the principle; that these causes have long since ceased to operate; that we have

acknowledged it; that we have acted on this acknowledgment in concerns of the deepest moment; that we have framed a course which, if the acknowledgment be true, is imperfect justice; if false, is absolute folly and rashness; and that, if we stop where we are, we are precisely in the situation of exciting every discontent, and organizing every mischief which can be generated by a sense of injury, and arming the party aggrieved with all the strength, and all the means of wreaking that resentment, which belong to solid and essential power; a situation from which we cannot be relieved by shifts or devices; a situation whose difficulties must every day augment, and, if only put aside, must recur with aggravated pressure; that there is only one mode of dealing with the difficulty; that the part of justice and of safety is the same; that we are called on to try the principle on which we have acted during the entire of the late reigns, and if we find it a sound one, to carry it to its full extent.

By the constitution of England, every liege subject is entitled, not merely to the protection of the laws, but is admissible to all the franchises and all the privileges of the State. For the argument I have now to deal with is this: "that by some principle of the constitution, independent of the positive law, the Roman Catholic is necessarily excluded." What then is this principle of exclusion? Merely this, "that the Roman Catholics acknowledge the spiritual supremacy of the Pope." Why then, if, independently of the positive law, this acknowledgment deprives them of the privileges which belong to the liege subjects of the realm, the exclusive principle must have been in force before the law. If so, there did not exist in England a liege man entitled to the privileges of the constitution before the time of

Henry the Eighth; for till then all acknowledged the spiritual supremacy of the Pope. Magna Charta was established by outlaws from the State. Those gallant barons, whose descendants have been so feelingly alluded to by my noble friend,* though they were indeed permitted to achieve, yet were not entitled to share the liberties of their country. They might not dare to open the great charter which had been won by their hardihood and patriotism. Nay, more, if this principle be true, there is not, at this moment, a liege subject in any Catholic country in Europe. Sir, such trash as this shocks our common sense, and sets all argument at defiance.

What is this spiritual supremacy of the Pope, and how does it affect the civil allegiance of the subject? The Roman Catholic submits to the authority of the common and the statute law; he acknowledges the force and bindingness of all constituted authorities and jurisdictions, civil and ecclesiastical; he claims no coactive or contentious jurisdiction, or other than a merely conscientious one; and the fullest illustration of this may be found in the fact—that although spiritual censure might, in this conscientious form, attach to a marriage which our law allows, yet still the Roman Catholic fully admits the legality of the marriage for all civil purposes, and would visit with spiritual censures any member of his church who transgressed against the civil rights which belong to the wife or to the issue.

This I believe they are ready to testify, in any form of words you may think it right to introduce; or to take the Oath of Supremacy, if altered or explained in that sense; and for the purpose of trying the practicability

* Lord Nugent.

of some such measure, I propose going into committee. Sir, if it is said that the spiritual power may be abused for temporal purposes, and that the appointment of their bishops may be an instrument for such purposes, I admit both; I shall allude to them more particularly before I conclude, and I for one shall most cheerfully concur in the appropriate remedies; but to say that, therefore, the allegiance of the Roman Catholic is imperfect, is an abuse of terms. After the repeated declarations of the legislature of both countries on this subject, it would seem not unreasonable to require from those who take upon themselves to graduate the scale of allegiance, for the purpose of exclusion from common right, to show where, in the principles of our law and constitution, or where, in the regions of common sense, they find the canon on which this exclusion is founded. Sir, it has been with no ordinary degree of regret that I have heard the opinion of the distinguished and learned prelate,* to whom I have before alluded, on this subject. With a candour which does him honour as a minister of religion, he fairly avows that the religious consideration is entirely to be thrown out of the case, save so far as it bears on the civil worth of the party. But he says, that "inasmuch as the Roman Catholic yields that spiritual homage to the Pope which (as he thinks) the Protestant of the Established Church of England yields to the King, and which the Protestant of the Established Church of Scotland yields to no man, he conceives himself warranted to infer that he possesses less of what he calls civil worth; and not only this, but that this difference is so important as to become a specific difference, and therefore to warrant the separation of the

* Dr. Marsh.

Roman Catholics into a distinct species, necessarily excluded from offices and franchises, while the two others continue entitled to the enjoyment of both." Sir, this is the kind of reasoning which Mr. Locke describes as "seeing a little, presuming a great deal, and so jumping to a conclusion." It might have occurred to the mind of the learned prelate, accustomed to the precision of mathematical proof as he is, that if the Roman Catholic, for the reason assigned, really had less civil worth than the Protestant, it would not therefore follow that he should be excluded, unless the Protestant's quantity of civil worth were first proved to be the minimum which would warrant admission. But what may be the nature of this quality which he is pleased to designate under the new appellation of "civil worth," he has not thought proper exactly to state. It leaves out, I presume, all consideration of birth or fortune, or such like; also the accidental circumstances of education and learning and talents; also the unessential attributes of truth and honour and probity; these all are circumstances too mean to form any part of his abstractions. I must presume so; for the person who possesses them all in the highest degree, if he happens to acknowledge the spiritual supremacy of the Pope, is actually excluded, is below zero in his scale of "civil worth;" and the person who is utterly destitute of all of them is admitted, provided he is not so punctilious as to refuse to deny that supremacy.

To the English dissenter, and to the orthodox Scotchman, he manifests a degree of indulgence which does more credit to his liberality than to his logic. They, it seems, are deficient in this "civil worth;" but still he admits them, rather, I suppose, to a kind of limbo, between the enjoyments which belong to perfect alle-

giance and the curse of utter exclusion. But he has, by some process, ascertained that the Roman Catholic has reached the exact degree of deficiency which necessarily draws down the sentence of condemnation.

Sir, it would have become the gravity and station of the person who made this assertion to refer to some authority or analogy of our constitution to warrant it, and not arbitrarily to draw a line of such fatal demarcation, merely because he has discovered a circumstance which distinguishes from each other two classes of his fellow-subjects and fellow-Christians. Mr. Burke truly says, that "there is no description of man more absurd than the metaphysician, who, dealing in essences and universals, rejects the consideration of more and less;" and never was the justice of this truly philosophical remark more strongly exemplified than in this argument, which excludes from the pale of the State, and from the hope of the royal favour, the Howards and the Arundels, and the long line of illustrious persons who have shone with the brightest lustre on the noblest periods of our history, who have gained the charter of our liberties, and fought the battles of law and freedom; and all for this want of "civil worth;" while it lets in the lowest and the vilest, no matter of what description, slaves or traitors, outcasts from everything connected with truth or virtue, merely because their "civil worth" is authenticated by denying the spiritual authority of the Roman Pontiff.

Sir, neither in this nor in anything is our constitution metaphysical or pedantic. Political constitutions are not like natural ones; they grow out of the action of man on man; there must be choice, approbation, distinction founded on moral differences. The wisdom and justice and discretion, by which the moral order is administered, are all unlike the laws of matter and of motion, which

govern the physical world; and, therefore, when we hear of a machinery so constituted as to be capable of letting into trust everything that is unworthy, and of shutting out everything that is exalted, we may be assured that we have to do with idle dreams, and that they do not proceed from any waking, sober, practical views of British law and constitution. If it is said that this touchstone does not let in the rabble I have described, but merely makes them eligible, then we come back to the true principles of our policy;—the power of the Crown to reject the base, and to select the worthy; the power of the people to exclude from the franchises which depend on their favour the candidates who are not deserving; and, above all, the controlling good sense and vigilance of the public mind to see that these privileges are not abused.

These, sir, are the sound, and rational, and practical principles on which our constitution has been formed; by these it must be preserved, and not by the affectation of what Mr. Pitt, with peculiar felicity, calls "a harsh uniformity;" not by inert abstractions, which are fit only for the school and the cloister, but become ridiculous when applied to the concerns of States and to the business of life.

I speak in the presence of enlightened constitutional lawyers and statesmen, and I do not fear contradiction when I assert, that the doctrine of exclusion is not to be found in the principles, or in the analogies of our constitution, or in the history of our country, or in the opinion of any statesman whose name or memory has reached us. It is at once inconsistent with the subject's rights and with the King's prerogatives. Ours is a free monarchy, and it is of the essence of such a government that the King should be

entitled to call for the services of all his liege subjects, otherwise it is not a monarchy; and that no class of his subjects should be excluded from franchise, otherwise it is not a free monarchy. I use the word franchise, not in the lawyers' technical sense of it, as a right supposed to be derived by prescription or grant from the Crown, but in the sense of Mr. Burke, when he applied it to the right of voting for members to sit, and to the right of sitting in Parliament. Sir, these are privileges, not derived from the grace of the Crown or the permission of the legislature, or from the positive declaration of any written law, but drawn from the great original sources from which Crown and law and legislature have been derived; from the sacred fountains of British constitution and freedom; the denial of which, as justified by any supposed principles of our constitution, I take on me to denounce as founded on a radical ignorance of the essence and stamina of our civil polity.

Such was not the opinion of Lord Bacon. With the permission of the House I will read the words of that illustrious statesman and philosopher. In his bird's-eye view of our constitution, after enumerating the classes of alien enemies, alien friends, and denizens, he goes on thus:—"The fourth and last degree is a natural born subject, and he is complete and entire; for, in the law of England, there is *nil ultra;* there is no more subdivision, no more subtle distinction beyond these; and hence it seems to me that the wisdom of our law is to be admired, both ways, both because it distinguisheth so far, and because it doth not distinguish farther; for I know that other laws do admit more curious distinctions of this privilege; for the Roman law, besides '*jus civitatis*,' which amounts to naturalization, has '*jus suffragii*;' for though a man was naturalized to take

lands of inheritance, yet he was not entitled to have a vote at the passing of laws, or at election of officers: and yet further they have '*jus petitionis*,' or '*jus honorum*;' for although a man had a voice, yet he was not capable of honour or office; but these are the devices commonly of popular or free estates, which are jealous whom they take into their number, but are unfit for monarchies; but by the law of England, the subject that is natural born hath a competency or ability to all benefits whatever."

This principle of exclusion, therefore, is equally at war with the prerogative of the Crown and the title of the subject. It wrests the sceptre from the King that it may strike at the liberties of the people, and obtrudes an unconstitutional monopoly on the just rights of both. It is an insolent republican principle, which has more than once been publicly and universally reprobated in this House; the principle of lawless association, for the purpose of lawless exclusion, and which promises a conditional allegiance to the monarch, so long only as he shall uphold the arrogant and exclusive claims of one class of his subjects against the inherent rights and privileges of the other.

I shall now proceed to show that this principle of common right was not touched, or meant to be touched, at the Reformation. The House will be so good as to excuse my dwelling somewhat on this part of the question, as no portion of our history is less understood than that of the Reformation, in as far as it affects the civil rights of the Roman Catholics. Sir, the Act of Supremacy was intended, not as a test of religion, but of loyalty; not to distinguish the Roman Catholic from the Protestant, but the well-affected Roman Catholic, who acknowledged the Queen's title and authority, from

the disaffected, who denied both. The title of the Act is, "An Act for restoring to the Crown the ancient jurisdiction over the State, ecclesiastical and spiritual." The Queen's injunction and admonition were issued to explain the oath for the express purpose of enabling the Roman Catholics, as well as other classes of dissenters, to take it. After ordering all offensive words, such as Papist, heretic, schismatic, to be forborne, under severe pains, she declares "that she does not pretend to any authority, save that which had at all times belonged to the imperial Crown of this realm, namely, that she had the sovereign rule over all persons under God, so that no foreign prince had rule over them; and if those who formerly appeared to have scruples about the oath were willing to take it in that sense, she was well pleased to accept of it, and did acquit them of all penalties in the Act." This explanation, so given by the authority of the Queen, is adopted by the legislature and incorporated into the Act of the 5th of Elizabeth, which is the first that requires the Oath of Supremacy from the members of the House of Commons. The 17th section of this Act is particularly entitled to attention; it recites in these words, "Whereas the Queen is otherwise sufficiently assured of the loyalty of the temporal lords of her high court of Parliament; therefore the Act shall not extend to them." Here, sir, is a legislative proof that the Act of Supremacy was a test, not of religion, but of loyalty, not of exclusion, but of selection; and accordingly it enumerated a class of acknowledged Roman Catholics, of whose faith and loyalty she was assured, and as such admitted them to the high court of Parliament, and to all offices whatsoever. I have already adverted to the alteration of the litany and communion service for the express purpose of admitting the Roman Catholics;

and any person who will take the trouble of looking into the history of the times, will see that for the first twelve years of her reign the Roman Catholics attended the service of the Church of England; so it is stated by Lord Coke in Cawdry's case, and so by Rapin, Burnet, and Hume. Nor was it until the twentieth year of her reign, when the Spanish schemes against her Crown and life were aided by the machinations of the foreign priests imported into England, that the punishment and exclusion of the Roman Catholics commenced. Sir, all this is well explained in Walsingham's letter to Monsieur Critoy, which is to be found in Burnet. The Queen there recognizes two principles, "first, that consciences were not to be forced, but to be won and reduced by force of truth, with the aid of time and all good means of instruction and persuasion; the other, that causes of conscience, when they exceed their bounds and grow to be matters of faction, lose their natures; and that sovereign princes ought distinctly to punish their contempt and practices, though coloured with the pretence of conscience and religion; not to make windows into men's hearts, but to punish their overt acts;" and he defends her Majesty from the charge of being a temporizer in religion. "It is not," he says, "the success of things abroad, or the change of servants here at home can alter her; only as the things themselves altered, she applied her religious wisdom to methods correspondent with them, only attending to the two distinctions above mentioned, first, in dealing tenderly with conscience; and secondly, distinguishing faction from conscience and softness from singularity." These, sir, I repeat it, are the dictates of royal wisdom, and thus, I humbly trust, our gracious sovereign will apply his royal and religious wisdom, that as the things them-

selves have altered, he may adopt methods correspondent with them. During the entire reign of Elizabeth, some of the highest and most confidential offices in the State were filled by Roman Catholics; and Mr. Hume states, as a thing notorious, that James the First gave preferment indifferently to his Roman Catholic and Protestant subjects.

That Roman Catholics sat and were considered as entitled to sit in the House of Commons as well as in the House of Lords, until excluded by the Act of the 30th of Charles the Second, is evident from Sir Solomon Swaile's case. In the year 1677, (the year before the 30th Charles the Second,) he was expelled, not for being a Papist, which was admitted and notorious, but for being a recusant. Sir Robert Sawyer's argument is this: "A Popish recusant cannot come near the King's person, and *à fortiori*, he cannot be of the great council of the realm; whoever disables himself from his attendance in Parliament you ought to discharge;" and the resolution of the House is "that Sir Solomon Swaile is convicted of Popish recusancy, and therefore discharged." So that for one hundred and twenty years after the reformation had been completed by Elizabeth, the notion that any merely religious tenet should disqualify for civil rights was never acted on or announced; the very title of the Act of the 30th Charles the Second is decisive, it being "for the more effectually preserving the King's Government by disabling Papists to sit in either House of Parliament." Sir, the reason is obvious why the measure was then resorted to; the religion of Charles was more than suspected, and the presumptive heir was known to be a Roman Catholic; and had he been at liberty to fill the offices of the State with Papists (in the most offensive sense of the word), and to pack a Popish Parliament,

there would have been no safety for the Protestant establishment, or for the civil liberties of the country. This case properly formed an exception to the universality of Lord Bacon's rule; for the King's power of selection ceased to afford any security. The functions of royalty were so far paralyzed, or worse, and the exception proves the justness of the rule. But were the exceptions then introduced made fundamental articles of our constitution? Were they incorporated with the great principles declared at the Revolution? No; but the particular mischief is for ever guarded against, by making it a fundamental law of the land, that the king shall be of the Protestant religion as by law established; thus applying a remedy precisely commensurate with the evil, not declaring that the valves of the constitution should be for ever closed against any portion of the people, but putting them under the control and guardianship of the King, declaring that he should execute that sacred trust no longer than while he continued a member of the Established Protestant Church. Sir, if I am asked, why then, when the Protestantism of the throne was thus secured, did the provisions of the 30th of Charles the Second continue? I answer, because the danger was not in fact done away, or at least the apprehension of it; because the return of the exiled family still impended over the country; that we have narrowly, by God's providence, escaped that calamity; and that it was not until nearly the period of his late Majesty's accession that all apprehensions on that score were effectually removed. But any person acquainted with the history of that period knows the 30th of Charles the Second was merely a substitute for a bill of exclusion; and that if the latter could have been obtained, the former never would have been resorted to; and Bishop Burnet tells us that King

William mainly rested the policy of that law on the Popery of the throne, stating that, while the King was not a Protestant, that law was the only security of the establishment.

Sir, I think I have now shown that these notions of exclusion are at war with the original spirit of our constitution, and that they form no part of the system either of the Reformation or of the Revolution. I will now proceed to demonstrate, from the records of Parliament and the authentic history of the times, that this Act of Charles the Second, which had been adopted as a necessary restriction for the time, was always refused as a permanent law, and carefully kept out of the wholesome circulation of the constitution; and that the period was always looked to, and the means anxiously preserved, of recurring to its true principles when the accidental obstruction should be removed. Sir, by the Act of the 4th and 5th of Queen Anne, cap. 8, the Lords Justices were empowered to act in the event of the Queen's death, until the arrival of her successor; the 16th section of the Act disables them from giving the royal assent to any bill for repealing the Act of Uniformity. And why? Because it was held to be a perpetual and fundamental law. But it was proposed in the House of Lords to introduce a clause disabling the commissioners from assenting to the repeal of the 25th of Charles the Second (the Test Act), or the 30th of Charles the Second, (the Act requiring the declaration), and the proposition was rejected. Here then is a direct and positive proof that the statesmen and legislature of that day did not contemplate the perpetual continuance of that law, and that they considered it as of a different class and order from that which secured the Protestant Established Church fundamentally and unalterably; yet now it seems it has

become a sacred element of the constitution, which it would be sacrilege to touch. When, in the following year, the Scottish Union was brought forward, they did not venture even to propose the 30th of Charles the Second as a provision to be incorporated as fundamental, but the zeal of bigotry did propose the Test and Corporation Acts. The proposition was made in the House of Lords, on the 1st of February, 1706, for the insertion of the Test Act as a fundamental law, and, in the House of Commons, for a similar insertion of the Test and Corporation Acts, and on full debate, the propositions were, in both Houses, rejected. What the Parliament intended as fundamental, it expressly declares, namely, the Scotch Act for the security of the Church of Scotland, and the English Act for the security of the Church of England; and they declare, that the said Acts shall, for ever, be held and adjudged to be observed as fundamental and essential conditions of the said union, and shall, at all times coming, be taken to be, and are thereby declared to be, essential and fundamental parts of the said articles and union; but when they come to state the oaths to be taken on admission to Parliament, the words are these, that every one of the lords of Parliament of Great Britain, and every member of the House of Commons, until the Parliament of Great Britain shall otherwise direct, shall take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, and shall subscribe the declaration contained in the Act of the 30th of Charles the Second.

What are the terms of the Act of Union with Ireland? "That every one of the lords of Parliament, and every member of the House of Commons of the United Kingdom, shall, until the Parliament of the United Kingdom shall otherwise provide, take the oaths and subscribe the declaration now by law required to be taken, made, and

subscribed by the lords and commons of the Parliament of Great Britain." Sir, here is the clear and express recognition by the legislature of both countries of the temporary nature of these oaths. In the words and in the spirit of both the unions, I call upon you now "otherwise to provide." Backed then by the known principles of the constitution, growing out of the nature and essence of our free monarchy; backed by the history and well authenticated objects of the Reformation, by the public declaration of Queen Elizabeth, and of her ablest ministers; supported by the declarations of the 5th of Elizabeth, expressly stating that the oaths required were tests of loyalty and not of religion, and admitting the Roman Catholic peers on the ground of their known loyalty, independent of the oath; supported by the admitted practice of one hundred and twenty years from the 1st of Elizabeth to the 30th of Charles the Second; having the clear evidence of history to show that the innovation then made grew out of circumstances accidental and temporary; supported by the Bill of Rights and Act of Settlement, which provide the proper remedy for the temporary evil, by a perpetual and fundamental law, securing the Protestantism of the throne; supported by the positive refusal of the House of Lords, in the 4th and 5th of Queen Anne, to treat it as a fundamental law; by the fact of its not being ventured to be proposed as a final regulation at the Scottish Union, though the Test and Corporation Acts were so proposed, and unsuccessfully; with the provision in the articles of that Union, which, while it defines the articles that were to be held fundamental, declares that the oath and declaration shall continue to be taken only until the British Parliament should otherwise provide; and with the express provisions of the legislatures of Great Britain and Ireland, at the

Irish Union, to the same effect; supported as I am by the records of Parliament, and the undeniable facts of history, by the acts of the last fifty years, which, if this principle were a sound one, would have been a continued outrage on the constitution; with the authority of the illustrious men who were cotemporary with that system of conciliation; Dunning, Pitt, Fox, Burke, Sheridan, Windham, enlightened statesmen, who saw their way, and engaged in this order of restoration on no light or superficial views, but on careful results, as wise and deliberate as they were liberal and noble, and who were well aware that if this course were to end in anything short of the full renovation of civil rights, it would have been, not a plan of policy, but a paroxysm of frenzy; supported by these great names, and not encountered by one which has had sufficient buoyancy to float along the stream of time; with these authorities, I ask, have I not redeemed (I had almost said triumphantly) the pledge which I threw down, when I arraigned the principle of exclusion as founded on a radical ignorance of the essence and stamina of our constitution? Triumph, sir, I cannot feel when I miss the ornaments of this House, when there is painfully obtruded on my mind the recollection of the losses which this cause and this country have more recently sustained; of Mr. Whitbread, the watchful and incorruptible sentinel of the constitution; the more than dawning talents and virtues of Mr. Horner; the matured excellencies of Sir Samuel Romilly, a light extinguished, which threw a steady lustre, not merely on his profession and his country, but over all the interests of mankind; Mr. Ponsonby, the constitutional statesman, who led the ranks of Opposition with disinterested honour, equally revering the constituted authorities and the people's rights; my ever-lamented friend Mr. Eliot, noble in his

nature as he was liberal in his sentiments, a model of what aristocracy ought to be, a bond between the people and the throne; Sir Arthur Pigott, the genuine representative of the sound, honest, constitutional English lawyer; above all, when I revert to this last and heaviest disaster, this dark and overwhelming calamity on which I dare not trust myself to speak—I feel anything but triumph; I feel that in passing before the images of these illustrious men, there is a funeral gloom thrown over this great procession, in which we are moving to offer up our bad passions and angry prejudices upon the altar of freedom and of concord. But, sir, though I feel no triumph, I boldly appeal to the sense and candour of the House, whether what I have endeavoured to demonstrate does not require some better answer than vague and general assertions, that the principles of the constitution, and of the Reformation, and of the Revolution, are hostile to the claim of civil rights, and whether the Roman Catholic can consider himself as fairly dealt with while his exclusion is rested on such gratuitous and arbitrary dogmas.

I am conscious that I press on the indulgence of the House, but there remains one topic to which it is absolutely necessary that I should closely and earnestly address myself, because I know that there are many persons, most worthy, respectable, and liberal, who on the score of religion, and of constitutional principle, are quite alive and friendly to the claims of the Roman Catholics, but who, at the same time, have serious apprehensions that the removal of their disabilities might endanger our Establishments in Church and State. Could I believe that the measure of redress involved consequences of injury or of danger to these Establishments, dear to my heart as I hold the interests of my

Roman Catholic countrymen, I should abandon their long-asserted claims, and range myself with their opponents; but having the most entire conviction of the groundlessness of the apprehension, and entertaining a sanguine hope that such alarms may be removed from the minds of those who are sincere in their profession of them, I particularly entreat the attention of the House. To the right honourable member for the University of Oxford,* I beg leave most especially to address myself, and I assure him I do so with all the respect due to his talents, his acquirements, and his integrity; to his high principles as a statesman and as a gentleman; I am well aware that there is no member of this House whose opinions are so likely to have influence on this subject, or whose being confirmed in his prejudices (if they are prejudices) is so likely to produce serious injury to the country.

Is it true then, that the Church is not exposed to any danger? I certainly will not take it on myself to make the assertion; but I say that this danger, whatever it may be, exists at this moment, and that the proposed measure, therefore, cannot produce it; I say, that it is not calculated to increase it; I go further, and I assert that it is, in the highest degree, calculated to diminish it.

Sir, the question is unfairly dealt with when it is asked what security have we for the Protestant Church, if we adopt this measure? I answer, every security which you have if you do not adopt it, and a great many more. The fallacy consists in supposing that we propose to pass from a state of security and ease, to an untried scene of difficulty and danger; whereas the danger at this moment exists—the disproportion be-

* Mr. (afterwards Sir Robert) Peel.

tween the Roman Catholic population, and that of the Establishment (I speak of Ireland) is not produced by this measure; the insecurity is in the narrowness of the basis, which neither this nor any other measure can either cause or remove, though it may in some degree remedy it; and it is beyond the reach of human art to provide an adequate remedy in any other way than by making it the interest and duty of this population to abide by and to support the Establishment. Let those who propose not to meddle with this question, but to leave it to tide and time, consider the nature of the dangers as stated on a former occasion by the right honourable member for Oxford, or suggested by him, and every one of which exists at this moment in all its dimensions, without any reference to this measure. I shall endeavour to enumerate them substantially as put forward by him, or as necessarily resulting from the statements made by him.

First, the exceeding disproportion of the Roman Catholic to the Protestant population in Ireland. The right honourable member did not, I believe, profess to state it exactly; I myself believe that it is much greater than is generally supposed,—certainly more than four to one—but for the purpose of this argument it matters not.

Next, this great majority principally contribute to the support of the Establishment to which they do not belong. Besides this, they exclusively support their own clergy.

By the principles of their religion they are in direct communication with a foreign potentate, through the medium of their clergy. This communication is uninterrupted and uncontrolled by the State.

Though the Roman Catholic clergy possesses a most

extensive influence over the passions, opinions, private and political principles and actions of the laity, yet the State neither exercises nor possesses any control over their appointment.

The established religion is not merely that of the small minority, but one which has dispossessed the great majority. This has been effected, not as in England, by a reformation of public opinion, but by an act of State, leaving the necessary consequences, irritation and hostility.

This great majority is in the unprecedented situation of being excluded from a great proportion of the franchises, offices and honours of the State, not on account of any moral or political delinquency, but merely on account of its religion. They are at the same time admitted to the full enjoyment of substantial power, including the command of our fleets and armies.

This ejected majority, if they are actuated by the motives by which man is ordinarily actuated, and by the feelings which nature inspires, must have views hostile to the religious Establishments of the State.

Though they disavow such principles on their oaths, still they must entertain them, and therefore they have been admitted to their present privileges on the faith of oaths which, if they are sincere in their religious opinions, cannot bind them.

They are, therefore, required by the legislature, and have accordingly stooped to stain themselves with the odious crimes of hypocrisy and perjury; the liberal feelings of the right honourable gentleman will, no doubt, induce him to say that he does not impute to them the wilfulnesss of perjury, but that they deceive themselves; be it so; as to the extent of the danger it matters not; they are swearing against nature, and their oath affords

no security; our danger is as great as if they were admitted without the oath, with this difference, that it is admitted that the oath which they are ready to take, cannot, on such a subject, bind them.

Being thus incapable of being bound by oaths, they are, at this moment, shut out from what is sought by oaths only.

The country in which all these dangers and anomalies exist is separated by nature from that to which it is united by law. It once had an independent existence; within twenty years had an independent legislature, and still has its separate courts of justice and distinct departments of executive government.

Now, sir, mark, if these are at all to be considered as causes of danger. Such is our existing state. An ejected majority of four to one; irritated and hostile; subject to the unbounded influence of a clergy appointed by a foreign potentate, unregulated by the State; placed in a portion of the empire separated by nature, recently and imperfectly united by law; and observe, this hostile majority, not an uneducated rabble, but with leaders now, and all of them, in the natural course of things, growing to be a wealthy, powerful, thriving, prosperous body; actually admitted to everything which constitutes real power in the State; and this on the strength of oaths which cannot bind them, without overturning the laws of nature; and at the same time, the remaining barriers and bulwarks of the State, resting on oaths and on oaths alone!

Sir, I ask any man really anxious for the safety of the Established Church of Ireland, is this the state in which it ought to be left? Is this the bed of roses on which the right honourable gentleman is disposed to rest himself? These, if he is right, are the existing dangers,

which at this moment threaten the safety of the Establishment; and amidst this rocking of the battlements we are told that the true and statesman-like conduct is to share in the repose of the right honourable gentleman.

Sir, no man, sensible of the dangers which really exist, and duly impressed with the vitality of the connexion between Church and State, can suffer this momentous question to depart from his mind; it is a problem of difficulty the most extreme, but until it is solved, there is no safety for the country.

The way in which the right honourable gentleman has argued the question is, to my mind, most alarming. The Roman Catholics, he says, if they have organs, senses, affections, passions, like ourselves; nay, if they are sincere and zealous professors of that faith to which they belong, will aspire to the re-establishment of their Church in all its ancient splendour. Why, sir, according to this view they ought to aspire to it! They ought to be sincere and zealous in their faith, and if so they will aspire to it. Why then, this subversion of the Establishment, which we are bound to the last extremity to resist, they are bound by an equally imperious duty to aim at! And then the right honourable gentleman tells them they have before their eyes the example of Scotland, which, with her Presbyterian Church, has been united to England with her Episcopal Church, all jealousies buried in oblivion and the political union completed.

Why then, having left the country committed in this manner; the establishment of the Protestant minority in Ireland opposed, not only to the schemes, but to what he considers as the rightful, natural, and necessary views of the Roman Catholic majority, who, if they are sincere in their religion, must desire to restore the ancient splen-

dour of their church, backed as they are by a sound constitutional precedent in the establishment of Presbyterianism in Scotland; we being determined, nevertheless, as I trust we all are, to hold our Establishment; bound to do so as we value our laws, our liberties, and the connexion between the two countries; and they being equally bound to subvert it—urged by the irresistible impulses of nature, by their organs, senses, affections, and passions, and sanctioned by the awful calls of religion in doing so—Sir, this is to leave the Protestant establishments, and the Roman Catholic people of Ireland, committed in necessary and interminable hostility, the one side insisting on subversion, and the other struggling for existence; and the right honourable gentleman says, it is a shame to come forward with undigested schemes, and to disturb this happy and halcyon state of security and comfort.

Sir, if I could view the question in the same light with the right honourable gentleman, I should indeed not propose to legislate; I should, like him, abandon it; but not like him with satisfaction; not under the impression that, in doing so, we were to continue in possession of the freedom and the glory derived from the constitution of our ancestors; but under the deep and afflicting conviction that our glories and our freedom were doomed to perish. I should, like him, remain inactive, but not at rest; I should turn from the question, not to a state of tranquillity, but of torpor; the prelude, not to repose, but to dissolution.

Sir, I am sure the right honourable gentleman is not aware of the consequences to which his position would lead. It goes to establish this monstrous doctrine, that the Roman Catholic who is sincere in his belief is bound to aim at the subversion of the Establishment, and so

divides society into two classes, those whose duty it is to support the Establishment, and those who are bound to overthrow it. It leaves no alternative. Every honest man in the country must be ranked on the one side or on the other. The bigotry which he imputes to the Roman Catholic imposes the duty of intolerance on ourselves. If it is of necessity a principle of their religion to overturn our Establishment, it becomes our duty to put down their religion. If this serpent is fostered under their altars, we must put down their altars. This alarming doctrine makes the distinction between tolerating their religion, and giving power to those who profess it, mere rant and folly. If that religion contains the spark which is to consume our Establishments, we must extinguish that religion. Toleration would be a crime. This imputed duty frightfully recoils upon ourselves, and the doctrine resolves itself into the most sublimated spirit of bigotry.

It is, therefore, most consolatory to me, that, in resisting the argument of the right honourable gentleman, I at the same time vindicate the Roman Catholics from the unmerited charge of hostility which is imputed, and relieve the Protestant from the hateful duty of intolerance which results from the imputation.

Sir, on behalf of the Roman Catholics, I am bold to say that, though they prefer their own religion to ours, yet that they find the Protestant religion established by law, by the same law by which their own lives, liberties, and properties, along with those of all the other subjects of this realm, are secured; that, if the right honourable gentleman were to state, to any well-informed Roman Catholic, the precedent of Scotland, he would laugh at his precedent; because he knows that the Presbyterian religion was the reformed religion of Scotland, that it

was so established at the Reformation, that it was so confirmed at the Revolution, and so ordered and perpetuated by solemn compact between the two countries at the Union; that on the contrary, the Protestant established religion of England, was, in Ireland, established at the Reformation, confirmed at the Revolution, and perpetually incorporated at the Union; that it forms a part of the fundamental unalterable law of the empire; that he therefore prefers a Protestant establishment and an unimpaired state to a Roman Catholic establishment and a subverted one; that he considers the possessions of the Protestant clergy as their absolute property, secured to them as sacredly as the private possessions of any individual are secured to him; that he abides by the oath which he has taken, to maintain that establishment, and that, so far from considering himself under any obligation to subvert it, he holds himself obliged, by the most solemn ties which can bind him to society, as a man, a citizen, and a Christian, to resist all attempts at its overthrow, from whatever quarter they may proceed. Most iniquitous and absurd would it have been in the legislature to require that such an oath should be taken by the Roman Catholics, if, as such, they were under a religious and moral obligation to violate it; the supposition would be equally degrading to the legislature which imposed, and to the Roman Catholic who submitted to it.

On what authority does the right honourable gentleman, in opposition to their oaths, burn and brand on the Roman Catholics this odious stigma? What have they done? What have they said? What have they sworn? He will not try them by their declarations, their oaths, or their actions; but, on views of what he calls human nature, he proscribes the great mass of the Irish people

from the honours of the State, and for principles which, if justly imputed, ought to shut them out from the pale of human society.

Sir, the sources from which the right honourable gentleman derives his view of human nature are not those to which I have had access. I cannot find in them that a Roman Catholic gentleman, enjoying every privilege of the British constitution, and with every avenue to wealth, and power, and place, and honour opened to him, should wish for the subversion of the State, in order that his priest may have a mitre. The alliance between Church and State is not founded on any such supposed propensity in the nature of man, but on a principle of policy, for the security of the State, and of all religion within it, and by which all sects are benefited by having the principles of religion incorporated with the State; and therefore to suppose that a man, sincere in his religion, must wish it to be the established one, argues an equal want of acquaintance with the nature of man and the institutions of society. There is a profound political wisdom in this alliance, and every man who regards the welfare of the State, be his religion what it may, is bound to uphold it; and he would be an absurd sectarian, as well as a wild politician, who, on such motives as are imputed, would engage in the experiment of heaving the Establishment from its centre, and overturning along with it the constitution of Great Britain.

But, sir, this I *can* read in the book of human nature: that if men are harshly excluded from the privileges of citizens; if the door of the State is closed against them; if they are stopped short in the career of honourable ambition; if they are made an invidious exception to the principle which allows the talents and virtues of every

man to rise to the level, that it may flow in the bed of the constitution; if they are told that they and their children, to the end of time, *nati natorum, et qui nascentur ab illis*, are to be stigmatized as a caste, and to be for ever excluded from honour, and station, and confidence; I *do* read in the book of human nature, that such persons have ground for discontent. And I cannot but admire the persevering cordiality with which men so circumstanced have fought the battles, and shared the dangers, and borne the burdens of their country. But I would disdain to make their patience an argument for their exclusion, nor can I shut my eyes to the danger which may result from its continuance.

What then is my remedy for the dangers which really exist? And what is the difference in this respect between the views of the right honourable gentleman and mine?

First, I propose to regulate and legalize, within its proper limits, the intercourse with the see of Rome, so as to satisfy the State that the communication for spiritual purposes shall not be perverted to become an instrument of political intrigue. What is the remedy of the right honourable gentleman? To leave the intercourse as it is, secret and uncontrolled.

Next, I propose to regulate the appointment of the Roman Catholic bishops, so as to assure the Government of the country, that they, and through them all the Roman Catholic clergy, shall be well affected to the State. What is the remedy of the right honourable gentleman? To leave the appointment as it is, unregulated and subject to the unmixed influence of a foreign power, which may be friendly, which may be neutral, or which may be hostile. The right honourable gentleman really seems so much in love with the perfection of his

danger, that he is afraid of having it spoiled by any alteration.

But, sir, my third proposition, and that to which all others must be secondary and subordinate, is to incorporate the Roman Catholics with the State. So to bind them to the present order of things, that their interest shall be our security. To give to the well-affected the reward of his loyalty, to take away from the revolutionist the pretext and the instrument of his treason. To rivet the honest Roman Catholic to the State by every good affection of his nature, by every motive that can affect his heart, by every argument that can convince his reason, by every obligation that can bind his conscience; not by adding the weight of a feather to his power, but by relieving his feeling from everything that is contumelious, insolent, and personal, by abolishing every odious distinction, every affrontful suspicion, every degrading exclusion. What is the remedy of the right honourable gentleman? To leave them as they are. Gracious heaven! To leave the great body of the Irish people bound by the law of their nature to plot the subversion of the State! I say of the State, because I trust that every man who hears me will say, that to subvert the Protestant establishment is to subvert the State.

I propose, not to take the shackles from his limbs. He is unshackled, free, and strong as we are. But to take the brand from his forehead, and the bitterness from his heart, and the sense of debasement from his mind.

The plan of the right honourable gentleman is, to leave him for ever a marked man and a plotting sectary. Mine is to raise him from exclusion and disability to the consciousness of having the full possession of the highest situation that can be occupied in civilized society; I mean the full participation of the rights, the privileges,

and the honours of a free-born British subject. Do not, I conjure you, turn your backs on this proposal of grace, of justice, and of security. Do not drive your Roman Catholic brother from your Bar, as a sulky and discontented outcast. You have admitted him into the bosom of the State, civil and military; do not in the same breath insult him by saying that he is, and that he ought to be, its enemy.

Sir, in considering the argument of the right honourable gentleman, I have not stopped to meet the supposition that the power of the Roman Catholic body to effect any hostile purposes can be augmented by, or grow out of this measure. He has, I think, truly said, that "in the natural, and therefore certain order of things, the Roman Catholic must constitute by far the most powerful body in Ireland. The right honourable gentleman has notions far too just and statesman-like to suppose that their power can, in any material degree, be affected by their obtaining seats in Parliament or admission to the excepted offices. No; their number, their wealth, their exercise of all professions, their possession of land, of commerce and manufactures, their constituting and commanding our fleets and our armies; these, the right honourable gentleman well knows, are the imperishable materials of political power, and that wherever the wealth, and knowledge, and arms of a State reside, there is its real power. Since the first foundations of the civilized world, steel and gold have been the hinges on which its gates have hung, and knowledge has been the guardian of their keys; any attempt on the part of man to overturn this eternal scheme of nature, this fixed law of Providence, is shallow and presumptuous. The power, therefore, to subvert cannot be created by this act of justice; will the desire be

kindled by it? Will the Roman Catholic feel a respect for the Establishment only on the condition of its being the cause of his exclusion from the State? gratified by the injury, indignant at the redress? These are puerilities to which the right honourable gentleman will not condescend. I agree with him in his manly view of the subject; if this measure is carried, we are to expect and wish that in progress of time (probably a very gradual one) the admission of the Roman Catholics may have a fair proportion to their qualifications; but I trust he will agree with me, that the power of making an impression on the Government, or on the people of this country, will depend, not on the circumstance of their claims being personally asserted within these walls, but on the justice and exigency of the claims themselves. The voice of the humblest subject of the realm, claiming the privileges of a citizen, will find its way to the honest members of this House, and to the honest people of this country, from the remotest corner of the empire; it will find an echo in every independent mind and in every generous breast.

In all continued struggles between a lawful government and a free people there can be but one issue. That party must prevail which has truth and justice on its side, otherwise there is an end of freedom or of Government, it must end in despotism or anarchy. While you resist the claim of civil right, the Roman Catholic is armed with truth and justice. Grant him what he ought to have, and if he refuses the reasonable conditions or aspires to more, you transfer to yourselves these invincible standards, and you may look with confidence to the result.

If it is said that the objection is not so much to any particular measure as to the principle of concession, and

to the difficulty of ascertaining its limits; I do not find it easy to ascertain the exact meaning of the argument. Is it meant that no concession should ever have been made? That Ireland should have been left in the situation to which the penal laws had reduced her; a jungle fit for the habitation of wild beasts—a moral waste, in which every principle of social order, and of political regulation, and of honourable feeling was defied? No; the right honourable gentleman says he rejoices that the system was departed from; he says so consistently; he must say so; he justly admits that restriction is in itself an evil, and if so, the removal of it must in itself be good.

It must mean then that there is a point at which concession ought to stop. I admit it. Have we passed that point? Where ought we to have stopped? And are we to retrace our steps? No; the right honourable gentleman says, we have not gone beyond it, but we arrived at it precisely in the year 1793, and by the arrangement then made he abides.

He will not, I know, condescend to the disingenuity of saying that our measure is bad because it involves a principle of concession, and that the principle of concession is dangerous because our measure is a bad one.

Well, then, the concessions of 1793 were wise and salutary, but anything more would be dangerous and unconstitutional.

The Irish Parliament, it seems, was so fortunate as to hit the exact point to which concession ought to go, and beyond which it ought not to be carried; why then, may I ask, is it not to be carried to the same extent in Great Britain? Why should not this just and critical measure, which has admitted the Irish Roman Catholic

to the grand inquest, to the magistracy, to the constituency, and to various high offices in the State, be extended to the English Roman Catholic, who is shut out from all of them, though with every claim, from rank and dignity, from patience and long suffering, and who is unaffected, besides, by those circumstances of danger which have excited so much alarm as to Ireland? Surely, were it for this purpose alone, the House ought to go into a committee. But, sir, I think there would be some difficulty, if we examine the details of the Irish Act of 1793, in demonstrating their perfect wisdom and consistency. The Roman Catholic there may be chief commissioner of the revenue, and yet may not hold the lowest office in the most petty corporation. He may be owner in fee of the estate to which the whole corporation right is annexed, he may transfer it, he may entail it, he may name every corporator and every officer, and yet he has not "civil worth" to entitle him to the meanest of these offices. He may be proprietor of a borough, so as substantially to nominate the member to serve in Parliament, and yet the State would be shaken if he were himself that member!

Sir, to enumerate all the inconsistencies of this supposed measure of final adjustment would be endless; but there is one so glaring that I must beg leave particularly to allude to it. You admit the Roman Catholic, both here and in Ireland, to the Bar; you invite him to study the laws of his country, to display his knowledge on a public theatre, where his talents and his acquirements are tried and known; you engage him in a career of honourable competition; you see him distinguished by the approbation of his countrymen; you see every relative connected with him gladdened and gratified by his successful progress; and when his heart is beating

high with the consciousness of desert, and the hope of fame and honour, you stop him in his course, you dash his hopes, you extinguish his ambition, you leave him disgraced and mortified, sitting on the outer benches of your courts of justice, and imparting the gloom of his own hopeless exclusion to every one connected with him by consanguinity, friendship, or religion. Sir, in the name of the Protestant Bar of both countries, I call on Parliament to rescue us from this disgrace, to relieve us from the odium and shame of this degrading monopoly, and to restore us to the privilege of equal and generous and honourable ambition.

One word more and I have done. It has been asked, where is concession to stop? I say, precisely where necessity, arising from public good, requires the continuance of the restriction. Exclusion is like war, *justum quibus necessarium.* Beyond this it would be folly to proceed. Short of this it is folly and injustice to stop. By this test let the claim be tried. If there is any office the possession of which by a Roman Catholic would be dangerous or injurious to our establishments, let him be excluded from it. If there is any franchise whose exercise can be attended with real danger, let it be withheld. Such exclusion, or withholding, is not an anomaly, or inconsistency, in our system of conciliation, because, when the exclusion is not arbitrary and gratuitous, there is no insult. Such an exclusion forms no link of the chain, and the Roman Catholic will submit to it cheerfully; just as it would be the duty of the Protestant if, for similar reasons, a similar sacrifice were required from him. Let him know, in intelligible terms, the reason and the necessity, and he is satisfied. But do not, in so momentous a concern, give him words, and think to reconcile him. Talk to him of the Protestant

establishment and he understands you; he bows to it; he sees it engraved in capitals on the front of the political fabric. But if you tell him of Protestant ascendancy, or Protestant exclusion, he asks in vain where its title is to be found; he looks in vain for it in the elements of our law or its traditions, in the commentaries of its sage expositors, in the Reformation, the Revolution, or in the Union—he sees in it nothing but insult and contumely; and he demands, in the name of the laws, and in the spirit of the constitution, that he may be no longer its victim.

Sir, I move, "That this House do resolve itself into a committee of the whole House, to consider the state of the laws by which oaths or declarations are required to be taken or made, as qualifications for the enjoyment of offices, or for the exercise of civil functions, so far as the same affect his Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects; and whether it would be expedient, in any and what manner, to alter or modify the same, and subject to what provisions or regulations." *

The right honourable and learned member was heard throughout with the most profound

* Plunket's speech on this occasion elicited a high encomium from that able critic Lord Dudley and Ward. He wrote to the Bishop of Llandaff in March, 1821:—"As to the Catholic question, the tone of the opposition to it is lowered to the utmost point; the anti-Catholics have but one advocate, and he is so completely over-matched by his chief opponent, that hardly a struggle is maintained. I wish you had heard Plunket. He had made great speeches before, but in this he far surpassed them all. I have not for many years heard such an astonishing display of talent. His style is quite peculiar, for its gravity and severity. I prefer it to all others of which I ever heard a specimen. If he had been bred in Parliament, I am inclined to think he would have been the greatest speaker that ever appeared in it."—*Lord Dudley's Letters to the Bishop of Llandaff*, p. 279.

attention, interrupted only by the loudest expressions of admiration and respect.

After a long debate, in which Peel, Mackintosh, Grant, and Castlereagh took part, the House divided, and the motion was carried by a majority of six in a house of 448.

This report of Mr. Plunket's speech was corrected by him, for the edition of Mr. Butler's "Historical Memoirs of the English, Irish, and Scotch Catholics," published in 1822. The following passages are extracted from the letter in which Mr. Butler requested that favour :—

From Mr. Charles Butler to Mr. Plunket.

DEAR SIR,

It will be an invaluable addition to it, if you will have the kindness to favour us with a corrected copy of your speech, as my work will then contain an eternal monument, not only of the ability of the speaker, but of the irresistible arguments by which the Catholic cause is supported. I cannot refuse myself the pleasure of mentioning, that Sir James Mackintosh (perhaps the highest authority extant) has declared in my hearing and in many companies, that yours was the ablest speech he ever heard in Parliament: the same has been said to me by Mr. Denman, Mr. Richard Sharpe, and many other excellent judges, both of the merit and of the effect of Parliamentary eloquence. I have attended the Catholic question in Parliament forty-two years: the most unpleasant moment I ever experienced was Mr.

Peel's display in 1816; especially as I thought it would require a very long speech to answer it; and a speech which requires a long answer is virtually unanswerable; my gratification at seeing you dispose of this celebrated oration, and completely undo its effect, in a short half-hour, is indescribable. I am, therefore, particularly anxious to have a correct copy of the speech, by which this pleasing wonder was effected. Permit me, therefore, to request it from you, as a very great favour; and, as the new edition is now far advanced, to add my hopes that I shall receive it soon.

I am more concerned than surprised, at the resuscitation of Orangeism in Ireland. I strongly hope that the Catholic concerns will not suffer from it.

We have no news, except that every letter from Hanover mentions that the king and his suite are completely tired with the visit, and sensibly feel the great difference between the solemn pace of the Hanoverian congratulations and the hearty and lively glow of joy with which they were received in Ireland.

I have the honour to be,
With the greatest respect,
Your much obliged and obed't humble servant,
CHARLES BUTLER.

Lincoln's Inn, 24th October, 1821.

On the 2nd of March, Plunket having stated the course he meant to pursue in managing the Catholic Relief Bill, the House went into committee, the resolution was agreed to, and Bills were ordered to be brought in on the 16th of March. On that day (the 16th) Mr. Wilberforce presented—most unwillingly, we may be sure—a

petition from certain Roman Catholics of Staffordshire and Lancashire, *against* the Bills—which is remarkable as having given Mr. Plunket occasion to utter one of his most bitter diatribes. Amongst the names of the petitioners appeared that of Dr. Milner,* whose aim it seemed to be to "out-Herod Herod," in narrow bigotry: he alone of the English Roman Catholic apostolic vicars opposing the measure of Catholic relief, on the ground professedly, that by more harmonious intercourse of Roman Catholics and Protestants, the Roman Catholic religion might be imperilled. I print the following short but powerful denunciation of this headstrong prelate. In noticing the petition, Sir T. Lethbridge instanced the views of Dr. Milner as a proof that no concession could ever satisfy the cravings of the Roman Catholics; upon this Mr. Plunket rose and said:—

The honourable baronet has thought proper in some degree, to anticipate the discussion of the subject, to which the attention of the House will shortly be directed, and I feel it necessary, therefore, to make one or two observations in reply to what has fallen from him. With respect to the signature of Dr. Milner, from which the

* For a very interesting personal sketch of this remarkable man, see Sheil's "Legal and Political Sketches." Article, "The Catholic Deputation." Vol. ii. pp. 19-55.

honourable baronet appears to derive so much satisfaction, I cannot help saying that in that individual it is only an act of undeviating, consistent bigotry. If I have felt some exultation in my mind that a measure of the highest possible public good should now be apparently on the point of attainment, it is with the deepest regret that I witness an attempt to darken the prospect of happiness and security. The same evil spirit which in 1813 came forward to blast the hopes of the Catholics is once more at work. The name of Dr. Milner is not at the head of this petition, but I am persuaded that he is the prime instigator of it—I am satisfied that he is at the bottom of a measure, the object of which is, to destroy once more the hopes of his Catholic fellow-subjects. Sir, I have a right to say, that the sentiments of the Roman Catholics of this country cannot fairly be collected from this petition. The petition of the Roman Catholics of England, which was laid before the House a few nights ago, was signed by seven apostolic vicars. Now, there are eight apostolic vicars in this country, and the eighth apostolic vicar, whose name was not annexed to that petition, who has disavowed that spirit of conciliation which animates his brethren, is the same upon whose intervention the honourable baronet has this night thought proper to congratulate the House. That gentleman is the same person, who, in 1813, came forward on the eve of the adoption of a measure for the relief of the Catholics, and by whose interference that measure was abandoned. He had been censured and disowned by the Catholic board; and the House will judge of the bigoted spirit of a man who could publicly declare, that the day on which Catholic emancipation was granted, would be a day of downfall for the

Catholic religion in this country. What is the object of this man? What, but to prevent the possibility of Roman Catholic emancipation—to destroy all hopes of conciliation—to keep alive religious dissension—and to render discord and dissatisfaction interminable, by perpetuating the distinction between Protestants and Catholics?

Certainly, sir, I never expected a general concurrence; for it is visionary to expect the concurrence of bigotry. Bigotry is unchangeable. I care not whether it be Roman Catholic bigotry or Protestant bigotry—its character is the same—its pursuits are the same. True to its aim, though besotted in its expectations—steady to its purpose, though blind to its interests, for bigotry time flows in vain. It is abandoned by the tides of knowledge—it is left stranded by the waters of reason, and vainly worships the figures it has imprinted on the sands, soon to be washed away. It is inaccessible to reason—it is irreclaimable by experience.

The debate on the second reading then commenced, and Plunket, in a long and masterly analysis, explained both his proposed Bill for the Emancipation of the Roman Catholics, and its companion measure which contained "the securities," under the title of "An Act to regulate the intercourse between persons in holy orders professing the Roman Catholic religion, with the See of Rome." "He had," he said, "adopted the plan of keeping the two bills distinct, as the Roman Catholic clergy might feel some delicacy

in seeing the two matters mixed up together, lest the one should appear as a compromise or barter for the other." And he thought, on the same principle, no measure for giving the Roman Catholic clergy a state provision should be mixed up with the main act of political equalisation, "lest the clergy should look upon the proposed public stipend as a condition for securing to the laity their civil rights." After a debate in which Wilberforce, Mackintosh, Peel, and Canning took part, both Bills were read a second time in the House of Commons, by a majority of eleven.

In this stage of the business Mr. Plunket was obliged to return to Ireland suddenly, owing to the death of Mrs. Plunket.

The care of the Bill then devolved upon Sir John Newport. Under his management, it passed its third reading in the House of Commons by a majority of nineteen.

The Bill was brought up to the House of Lords, where Lord Donoughmore took charge of it. On its second reading it was opposed by Lord Liverpool and the Chancellor, and was ably supported by Lords Grey and Lansdowne; and Lord Grenville, who had for some time entirely secluded himself from politics, appeared again, to assist his old friends with his great abilities, and the still

greater aid of his personal influence. The Bill was, however, lost on its second reading, by a majority of thirty-nine; there being (including proxies) 120 contents, and 159 non-contents.

CHAPTER II.

SHEIL ON EMANCIPATION—VISIT OF GEORGE IV. TO IRELAND—DISAPPOINTMENT OF THE CATHOLICS—THE MARQUIS OF WELLESLEY APPOINTED LORD LIEUTENANT—CORRESPONDENCE—PLUNKET'S APPOINTMENT AS ATTORNEY-GENERAL—LORD GRENVILLE ON EMANCIPATION—PLUNKET'S REPLY TO MR. ELLIS—SAURIN'S LETTER TO LORD NORBURY—O'CONNELL'S LETTER—THE "BOTTLE RIOT"—THE TRIAL—PLUNKET'S ADDRESS AND REPLY OF MR. NORTH—THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEFENCE IN PARLIAMENT.

THE success of Mr. Plunket's Relief Bill was little expected by the Irish Catholics, so that the news of its having passed a second reading in the House of Commons, was hailed by all the moderate and respectable men of that party with acclamations. The "securities" which it was proposed to give, in order to conciliate Protestant prejudice and suspicion, were really so unimportant, that very few of the Catholics at first took offence at these terms. Dr. Doyle, by far the most eminent of the Roman Catholic bishops (the celebrated *J.K.L.*), wrote to Sir Henry Parnell, as soon as the success of the first reading of the bill was announced. "I could not convey to you an idea of the satisfaction which the late decision

of the House of Commons gave here to all parties. I have been speaking with some of the most respectable persons in this country, who were hitherto opposed to every concession, and who seem now perfectly satisfied with emancipation on the terms alluded to by Mr. Plunket. Our people met here yesterday to request the support of our representatives on the second reading of the Bill."*

Mr. Sheil, addressing a large meeting of Catholics in Dublin on the same subject, said, "The Catholic Bill has passed the House of Commons. The mere statement of the fact bears with it more than any comment could convey. It is an epoch in the history of Ireland, and it may be regarded as the day of her great political regeneration. It is indeed a proof that the measure has been carried in the public opinion, that it has received the impartial assent of the British people, and that whatever temporary obstructions it may encounter, they must be speedily surmounted, through the operation of the common conviction of the nation's mind that this gigantic limb of the empire should be unshackled and set free. You have not yet entered the Constitution, but its gates have been thrown open, amidst the acclamations of the empire, and

* *Life and Times of Dr. Doyle*, by W. J. Fitzpatrick, vol. i. p. 147-148.

they stand expanded before you. How great a debt do you owe to those who, with the thunder of their eloquence, have burst the ponderous bars asunder, and flung them round on their unyielding hinges, rusted as they were by inveterate prejudices, till at last they have disclosed the great temple to the reception of a long excluded people! . . . . But there is one person, the eminence of whose services rises beyond all the other elevated names by which he is surrounded. He has borne away the suffrages of the empire, and, by a single bound of his vigorous mind, has reached a point of glory to which others, by the toil of years and with great talents, have not been able to attain. His masterly skill, his irresistible reasoning, his impassioned and cordial eloquence, have united the House of Commons in one acclamation in his praise; and while he asserted the liberties he added to the literary renown of Ireland. . . . It is far beyond the present generation that the advantages of this liberating measure will be felt. It opens prospects full of prosperity and peace, and gives a glorious insight into future time. Let us not blast those prospects, —let it not be said that we have marred the freedom of Ireland. We have long asked for liberty, and it is now offered to us; Ireland has long stretched out her supplicating hand for the

precious chalice that seemed to mock her favoured lips; it is now presented to her; and will she in a paroxysm of her delirium, dash it to the earth? This is the very crisis of our fate, and it is the duty of every man to stand up in the vindication of his country; we have done so—and not, I trust, in vain."

It was not, however, to be expected that the violent "Anti-Vetoists" would instantly submit to some of the clauses contained in Mr. Plunket's Bill, or that the agitators would so easily part with their occupation and influence; accordingly diocesan meetings were held all over Ireland, by the Roman Catholic bishops and clergy. At some of these, verbal alterations were suggested to be introduced into the Bill while passing through the House of Lords; but at others the "securities" were condemned *in toto*, and very violent language was used. For instance, in Limerick the priesthood of that diocese declared that "the clauses were unnecessary, vexatious, dangerous, and ultimately subversive of the Roman Catholic religion;" and Mr. O'Connell, addressing a meeting in that town, spoke of Mr. Plunket's Bill as "more penal and persecuting than any or all the statutes passed in the darkest and most bigoted periods of Queen Anne and of the first two Georges!"

Such was the state of feeling in Ireland, when

news arrived in Dublin, that the emancipation Act had been thrown out in the House of Lords, and the loud exultation of the Roman Catholics was suddenly changed for the silence of despair. But the manner in which the partial success of the measure was received is interesting, as indicating the course likely to have been taken by the various classes of Roman Catholics, had Mr. Plunket's Bill, or any similar measure at that time passed into law.

A few months later an event occurred in Ireland which gave a wholly different turn to popular opinion, and seemed for a time to change the face of society in Dublin. This event was the visit of George IV. For the first time in the history of the connexion between the two countries, the King of England came on a mission of peace and conciliation to his Irish subjects, and it certainly seemed as if all the loyalty and enthusiasm of a people that had for so many centuries been widowed of their Sovereign was accumulated to be poured out on this occasion. From the moment that the king set his foot in Ireland until he left her shore, the ovation never ceased. Wherever the royal *cortége* proceeded its course was lined for miles on either side by thousands of enthusiastic admirers. Loyal addresses and hearty congratulations poured in from every town

and county. Dublin for the time presented a spectacle as rich and gay as the wealthiest cities of England or the Continent could boast; strangest wonder of all, the Orange corporation of Dublin suggested to the Catholic committee that they should sink their old feuds in the common cause of welcoming their sovereign, and this proposal was heartily accepted. During the whole period of the royal visit, the excitement and the triumph never flagged, and when the sovereign took his departure from Kingstown, O'Connell, on bended knees, presented his Majesty with a laurel crown.

We who have read what had been the earlier history of the relations between George IV. and the Irish people,—who know what manner of man he was that they delighted to honour, and how bitterly their bright hopes were disappointed,—may well admire while we wonder at their wild loyalty and misplaced confidence; but the story of that solitary kingly visit is surely not without its moral.

While George IV. was in Ireland he showed the most marked courtesy to the leaders of the Liberal party. When the Catholic prelates waited upon him they were received in their ecclesiastical robes, with their golden crosses and chains —though their dignity as prelates had never before been recognized. To the Earl of Fingal, as head of the Catholic laity, the ribbon of the

Order of St. Patrick was given, at an installation at which the king himself presided ; he received and treated the rest of the Catholic laity precisely on the same footing as Protestants, and when he left Ireland desired Lord Sidmouth to write a royal letter, advising that all sectarian rancour should be laid aside ; the letter went on to say, " His Majesty trusts that not only the spirit of loyal union which now so generally exists, will remain unabated and unimpaired, but that every cause of irritation will be avoided and discountenanced, and mutual forbearance and goodwill observed and encouraged."

From all these hints the Catholics had collected a hope that their longed-for measure of justice would now receive the earnest support of his Majesty and of the whole cabinet, but they soon learnt that George IV. meant to keep faith with them just as he had kept it with every human being with whom he had ever been connected. When it became known that the King and his immediate advisers still held their anti-Catholic opinions unaltered, society in Ireland relapsed into a state worse than that in which it had been before his Majesty's visit. The Orangemen broke out into language and conduct more insulting to their fellow-countrymen, while the Roman Catholics sank into a state of gloomy and vindictive desperation. Orange and ribbon socie-

ties respectively gained an enormous importance throughout the country, and O'Connell, with all his tact and all his influence, found it scarcely possible to restrain the passions and prevent a rising of the people. A rebellion of the Irish Catholics was never aimed at or wished for by O'Connell, for he well knew that it could only have ended in suppression and retaliation, and the postponement of all hopes of emancipation for many years.

Such was the state of feeling in Ireland when the Marquis of Wellesley was sent over to that country as Lord Lieutenant, in the end of the year 1821. Mr. Plunket's appointment as Attorney-General under this viceroyalty, which opened to him the most important era of his political career, arose out of the vicissitudes of Lord Liverpool's cabinet, rather than from the half-hearted wish of George IV. to conciliate the feeling of the Roman Catholics.

The premier's supporters, though quite strong enough in numbers to resist successfully the attacks of the Opposition in every division, were overmatched in debate. On the Catholic question especially this weakness was manifest, and though Lord Liverpool might at a moment's notice have raised a powerful anti-Catholic feeling in the House, as well as through the country, yet he could not so easily call up to his assistance such

debaters as Brougham and Tierney, Mackintosh, and Plunket. True, the defeat of Catholic relief was not made a cabinet question, but the fact that so many of the Ministers were its prominent opponents was found highly embarrassing to the Government. Besides, at the beginning of 1821 there was much agricultural distress, and the country gentlemen became restive and clamorous. The King, too, as he grew old, was fidgety and hard to manage, and a rumour went abroad, giving confidence to the Opposition, that Lord Liverpool was no longer so pleasing in the sight of his Majesty as he had been. It was therefore determined to strengthen the cabinet, by calling in the services of Mr. Peel, and at the same time to invite the co-operation of the party who still owned allegiance to Lord Grenville. To make room for Mr. Peel, Lord Sidmouth resigned the home department, retaining his seat in the cabinet. When the Grenville Whigs joined the cabinet of Lord Liverpool, they certainly believed they would by so doing be better able to serve the interests of the great measure which was nearest to their hearts than by continuing in opposition. The line of argument which led them to this opinion was very fairly, and satisfactorily, explained by Mr. Plunket, when he was attacked in 1825 (February 11) for inconsis-

tency with reference to this transaction. His speech on that occasion will be found in the next chapter, but I may for the present summarise his statement of the motives which actuated him and his friends by saying that their advocacy of emancipation was to be as decided and uncompromising as it had ever been. That they believed there was more chance of carrying that measure if its battle were fought by a large number of persons connected with the administration in alliance with its old champions of the Liberal party, than if all its supporters were to be found in opposition faced by a nearly unanimous cabinet, pledged to oppose it. That in case the claims of the Catholics were neglected, their failure (or, if they succeeded, their triumph,) must be attended with less danger and more advantage, under a ministry partly composed of its friends than of one entirely hostile, and that until better and juster laws were enacted the existing ones would be administered in a spirit more fair and conciliatory towards the Catholics than had been shown for fifteen years.

The following correspondence shows that Plunket and the other Grenvillites had in their conduct on this occasion the entire sanction of their venerable chief, and that the terms they accepted with reference to the Catholic question were honourable and direct.

[*Private.*]

Marquis of Buckingham to Mr. Plunket.

MY DEAR SIR, *London, November* 30, 1821.

I take the earliest opportunity of informing you that Lord Liverpool has been pleased to open to me the wishes of himself and his colleagues, that my friends should, in official situation, assist his Majesty's Government. The proposition has been too lately made to enable me yet to state its full extent. As far as I am yet informed, the only change contemplated in the present form of the Government, is the resignation of Lord Sidmouth. Lord Liverpool, however, in adverting to the state of Ireland, referred to the confidential communication which he had had with you, when you were last in England, and stated that since that time the King had satisfied himself that measures might be pursued which would keep the Catholic question in a state in which neither of the contending parties would preponderate. That in this spirit of conciliation his Majesty had communicated lately with you, and had reason to think that you were satisfied with the views of Government on this subject, and would be disposed to accede to an arrangement now in progress for making you Attorney-General of Ireland, retaining your seat in Parliament, and taking an active part in the House of Commons. I naturally feel most anxious, before I return any answer to Lord Liverpool's proposition, to know how far this statement agrees with your feelings and opinions, especially upon the subject of the Catholic question. Upon the answer which you may think it fit to give will mainly depend my decision. The state of Ireland hourly presses more upon our attention. My

own opinion upon it, imperfectly formed, would be much decided by knowing what is yours, and my disposition to encourage a proposition for making my friends efficient parts of the Government, would depend in a great degree upon the circumstance of your taking a share in it, retaining your seat, and giving your attendance in the House of Commons. In that House is the great weakness of the Government to be found, and the assistance which your powers would give it there, would be a strong inducement to me to think well of the proposed arrangement.

May I request that any answer which your unvaried kindness towards me and your friendship for Lord Grenville may induce you to give me upon these points may be transmitted to me in London with as little delay as possible? and that you will believe the esteem and regard with which I have the honour to be,

My dear Sir,

Your very obliged and very faithful humble servant,

CHANDOS BUCKINGHAM.

The Right Hon. Mr. Plunket.

[*Private.*]

Mr. Plunket to the Marquis of Buckingham.

MY LORD, *Dublin, December 3rd,* 1821.

The mail has arrived here after a continuance of eight or nine days of storm, and I have just received your lordship's letter of the 30th. I hasten to acknowledge it, and to express the strong sense I entertain of your lordship's kindness and confidence.

When I was in town last March I took the liberty of asking Lord Grenville's advice with reference to an overture which had been made to me on the part of

his Majesty's Ministers, and on which I had declined to act until I should have the opportunity of learning his sentiments, finding that he had formed a decided, and I must say most lamentable resolution, not to become a member of administration; but knowing at the same time, how entirely his views and opinions on the state of public affairs coincided with those of the Government, I felt disposed to accede to the proposal which had been made of resuming my former office of Attorney-General for Ireland. Your lordship was not then in town, or I certainly should have availed myself of your confidence and friendly interest in my affairs to have asked the benefit of your advice. Lord Grenville agreed with me that there was no possible objection to the proposed arrangement; at the same time he suggested the propriety of holding myself free as to the time and mode of dealing with the Roman Catholic question. The business has hung over from that time to this present, and though the measure was understood, nothing effectual has been done towards its accomplishment, till within these few days. On the subject of the Roman Catholics as to the policy to be pursued respecting the bringing forward their question, I never have given or indeed formed any definite opinion, and I hold myself just in the same situation as if I were to remain utterly unconnected with the administration. It appears to me manifest that great advantages are to be derived to that cause from the introduction of some of its known and steady friends to some share in his Majesty's councils, and I own I should grieve if any thing were to withhold your lordship's services, and those of some of your near friends, at this critical period.

That the Roman Catholic question cannot, for any

great length of time, be kept back, appears to me evident, but it seems equally clear that there is great occasion for caution, and much room for accommodation, as to the time of bringing it forward; nothing could be more injurious than the risking the loss of any of the vantage ground which we have taken possession of during the last session; and one cannot but apprehend that such might be the consequence of bringing the measure forward, without some better prospect of good sense and good temper on the part of the Roman Catholic clergy than they displayed on the late occasion. Of improvement in that quarter I am led to entertain some hopes, as well as on the part of that of the laity who were least manageable; and all these are arguments for delay. At the same time this should be certainly kept open for discussion, and above all, must not be liable to be considered as the result of contract or stipulation, especially with any portion of the Government; which would undoubtedly tend to throw the Roman Catholic body into dangerous hands. Under these circumstances, and reserving this perfect freedom, I am quite disposed to attend in Parliament, and render whatever services I can to the general measures of administration. I write to your lordship as you desire it, fully, my opinions on a subject, when I should be much more disposed to ask yours, were I on the spot, and the time admitted it. Will you have the goodness to communicate what I write to Mr. Wynne, and to him only? I trust I shall soon learn that the public cause has been strengthened by your lordship's accession and by his. We are in a state of extreme disturbance and agitation here. The accounts are much exaggerated, however, *as I believe;* for I have not had the honour of the slightest communication from any person connected with the Irish Government. This

state of the country, whilst it furnishes the fullest proof of the necessity of disposing of the question to which I have adverted, does not, perhaps, afford strong encouragement for bringing it forward just at present; but on this and all the matters connected with it I shall look with great anxiety to learn the opinion of Lord Grenville.

I beg your lordship to believe how sensible I am of your kindness in consulting with me on the present occasion, and that I am with great truth and regard, always, my lord,

Your lordship's obliged and faithful humble servant,

W. C. PLUNKET.

[*Private.*]

Mr. Wynn to the Earl of Liverpool.

MY DEAR LORD, *Dropmore, December* 11.

Although I understood from Lord Londonderry that he had fully detailed to your lordship the conversations which have passed between us, and stated the difficulties which pressed upon my mind respecting the flattering proposal conveyed to me through Lord Buckingham, I feel it due to your lordship, both as the head of his Majesty's Government and also one of those members of it from whom I differ on the Catholic question, that before any final determination be taken I should explain without reserve the feelings and opinions by which my conduct must be actuated in the event of my acceding to the proposed arrangement. Regretting as I do the difference of sentiment to which I have already adverted, I must premise distinctly and in terms which cannot be misunderstood that it would be impossible for me to form a part of any Government without reserving to myself in the most ample manner the full liberty not

only of supporting and advocating but of originating, either in Parliament or in council, any proposition which may appear to me desirable to promote the amelioration of the general state of Ireland; and it is scarcely necessary for me to add that, in my judgment, concession to the Catholics is a primary step towards the accomplishment of this inestimable object. It would be moreover essential that I should not only possess, but, also, at my own discretion, avow, the perfect liberty of speaking and acting which I retain on this subject; and it is probable that I might feel myself called upon to declare publicly that as the hope of contributing to the success of this measure had been my principal inducement to accept of office, so I should not hesitate one moment to relinquish it from the time of my being convinced that this purpose might be more effectually assisted by my resignation. The circumstance which mainly encourages me to act upon this hope is the intended appointments of Lord Wellesley and Mr. Plunket. This appears to hold out to Ireland in general the fairest prospect of a firm, impartial, and conciliatory administration, while their known sentiments with regard to the Catholics in particular will I trust excite in that great body of his Majesty's subjects a confidence from which the most beneficial results may be expected. These nominations are, however, accompanied by that of another gentleman as chief secretary whose opinions are known to be directly at variance with those of Lord Wellesley and Mr. Plunket on this most momentous subject. To Mr. Goulbourne's merits and general character every man must do justice, who has observed his conduct in the department which he has hitherto filled, but I am so deeply impressed with the inconvenience and irritation which may arise from the apprehension in the public mind of counteraction and

opposition between the Lord Lieutenant and his secretary at a period of so much disturbance as the present, that if this should be made the subject of Parliamentary discussion, I may, besides referring to my not having participated in H.M.'s counsels when the appointment took place, find it necessary to declare that it was one in which I could not have concurred. Lord Londonderry has already, I have no doubt, fully stated to your lordship the various discussions which have taken place on public measures in my conversations with him, but the points I have adverted to in this letter are of such paramount importance that I am sure you will agree with me in thinking them fit to be the subject of a direct and specific communication to your lordship. Upon these points, therefore, as upon that of the confident expectation which I collected from Lord Londonderry of Lord Wellesley and Mr. Plunket's appointments being both completed before the meeting of Parliament, I shall hope to hear from your lordship as soon as is consistent with your convenience.

I have the honour to be, my dear Lord,
Your lordship's most faithful and obed't servant,
C. W. W. W.

P.S.—I return to town to-morrow and will be obliged to you to direct your answer to No. 6, Whitehall.

[*Private*]

Lord Liverpool to C. W. W. Wynn, Esq.

MY DEAR SIR,

I was prepared by Lord Londonderry's for the letter which I have received from you this morning, and he has of course communicated to me the substance of the conversations which he has had with the Marquis of Buckingham and yourself since my departure from

London. Agreeing, as I have every reason to hope we do, in all the other leading principles of government, foreign and domestic, the difference which unfortunately exists between us on what is called the Roman Catholic question must be a matter of sincere regret to me. You will do me the justice, however, to believe that this difference can only be founded on an opinion that the beneficial consequences supposed by yourself and others to be likely to follow the proposed alteration of our laws on this subject, would not in fact result from it; but I think it material further to add, that whether I may or may not be mistaken, I am fully persuaded that in the state in which that question now is, and under all the circumstances of the country, fewer public evils are likely to arise from the adoption or rejection of the Catholic claims, under a Government of a mixed character, than might occur under one which for brevity I designate as exclusively Protestant or exclusively Catholic.

With a knowledge of the sentiments entertained by you, and by those immediately connected with you, on this question, I could never have ventured to have asked the King's permission to be the bearer of the proposition which has been made to you, unless I had been prepared to have it distinctly understood that you would be at full liberty to support, to advocate, and even to originate, if you should deem it necessary, any measure of which the removal of the disabilities of the Roman Catholics might form a part or the whole; and you can certainly not be precluded from adopting hereafter any line of conduct which, in the discharge of your public duty, a consideration of what is due to this question, combined of course with what is due to other great national interests, may appear to you to require. I trust that this explanation will prove satisfactory to

you; and I have only to say, with respect to the appointment of Mr. Goulbourne, that upon the principle upon which the Government is acting, I can never consider the opinion of any individual, whether in support or in opposition to the Roman Catholic claims, to be in itself a bar to his appointment to office in Ireland, provided he is in all other respects duly qualified. It being understood that the existing laws, whatever they may be, are to be equally administered with respect to all classes of his Majesty's subjects, and that the Roman Catholics are in any case to enjoy their fair share of the privileges and advantages to which they are by law entitled.

With regard to the appointment of Lord Wellesley and Mr. Plunket, the appointment of the former has already taken place, and he will leave London for Ireland as soon as his private arrangements can be made. Lord Wellesley will have instructions for carrying into immediate effect the intentions respecting Mr. Plunket. In the mode of accomplishing this most necessary and important object, some consideration ought and must be had for the feelings of the gentlemen now in office; but in order to obviate any eventual embarrassment on this head, I can have no objection to the other arrangements being suspended until Mr. Plunket's appointment is effectually secured.

I cannot conclude without assuring you of the cordiality of my feelings towards you, and without expressing the sincere pleasure and satisfaction which I shall have in an official connection with yourself and your friends.

Believe me to be, with sincere regard,

Your very faithful, humble servant,

(Signed) LIVERPOOL.

C. W. Williams Wynn, Esq.

[*Private and confidential.*]

Mr. Wynn to Mr. Plunket.

MY DEAR SIR, *Whitehall, December* 13, 1821.

I have delayed from day to day to write to you till I could communicate something decisive upon the proposition which Lord Buckingham informed you had been made to us. The difficulties which I felt on the subject were considerable, arising partly from my doubt whether the change proposed in the Government was sufficient to justify my joining it, and partly from the increase in the Cabinet of the party opposed to Catholic emancipation, by the addition of Mr. Peel, while Lord Sidmouth retained his seat. Still, upon the most mature consideration I could give to the subject, it appeared to me that the appointment of Lord Wellesley and yourself was likely to confer such essential benefits upon Ireland, and to afford such means of really ameliorating the state of the Catholics by giving them the full advantage of the existing laws, at the same time that it may also facilitate further concession, that I should more effectually assist the cause for which we have so long struggled by accepting than refusing. The grounds on which I have proceeded, and the explanation and reservation under which I have acceded to the proposition, will best appear to you by the letter which I addressed to Lord Liverpool on the subject, and his answer, the latter of which I received about an hour ago. Lord Buckingham being out of town, I cannot as yet return a formal answer of acceptance; but I know that his opinions upon the subject are in conformity with mine. I will, in the

course of a day or two, send you a copy of the letters I have adverted to. In the meantime,

Believe me, my dear Sir, ever most
Faithfully yours,

C. W. WILLIAMS WYNN.

[*Private.*]

The Marquis of Buckingham to Mr. Plunket.

MY DEAR SIR, *Accrington, December* 18, 1821.

Mr. Williams Wynn will have communicated to you the final conclusion of the proposition made to me, a conclusion which your invaluable letter principally enabled me to come to. I have been pressing upon Lord Liverpool the immediate final arrangement of your object, as I wished our connection with that Government to be made simultaneous with yours. I got a letter from him to-day, from which I think it right to send you the following extract:—"I feel with you all the importance of the whole arrangements taking place as nearly as possible at the same time; and if I wish for a short delay, it is because I am convinced that Lord Wellesley and Mr. Goulbourne will find great facilities in carrying their point respecting Mr. Plunket, from being able to state that the general arrangement is suspended till it can be brought to a conclusion."

Charles Wynn will have read you an extract of Lord Liverpool's letter to him. The expressions respecting the Catholic claims are so satisfactory and so strong that I cannot but think he must see the approaching success of your measure. Rumour states the Chancellor here not to be as popular as he was with his royal master.

Believe me, my dear Sir, always yours
Most faithfully,

CHANDOS BUCKINGHAM.

Here is also a letter from Lord Londonderry, whom (as Lord Castlereagh) Plunket had so often selected as the object of his invective.* The mind of that great statesman was too noble to preserve any trace of ill-feeling: indeed the tone of this letter suggests that in their hostile meetings he felt when closing with Plunket only—

The stern joy that warriors feel
In foemen worthy of their steel.

* How far Plunket's feelings towards Castlereagh had changed since the days when, defending against him his country's independence, he hurled those terrible denunciations already recorded, may be judged from the following letter addressed, after the death of the great Castlereagh, to his brother, then Lord Londonderry, in answer to an application for Plunket's official assistance in some personal matter:—

[*Private.*]

"*Mr. Plunket to Lord Londonderry.*

"My Lord, *Stephens' Green, December* 2, 1823.

"I have the honour of acknowledging your lordship's letter of this morning, and the three enclosures contained in it. Your lordship does me no more than justice in estimating the feelings of regard, affection, and gratitude with which the memory of the late Marquis of Londonderry affects, and must ever affect, my mind. His friendship and confidence were the prime causes which induced his Majesty's Government to desire my services, and I can truly add that my unreserved reliance on the cordiality of his feelings towards me, joined to my perfect knowledge of the wisdom and liberality of all his public objects and opinions, were the principal causes which induced me to accept the honour which was proposed to me. Nothing can ever occur to me in political life so calamitous as the event which your lordship so deeply deplores. Need I say, that with these sentiments I must attend with no common interest to anything affecting his memory, or involving the just claims of your lordship as the representative of his honour and interest. . . . . I can most truly assure your lordship that I should be conscious of acting a very unworthy part if I were to omit any opportunity which might present itself of marking my strong sense of the commanding claims which attend your lordship as the brother of one to whom, more than to any or to all the members of the King's Government, that Government and the country are indebted for the high situation in which they are at present placed. . . . . .

"Your lordship's very faithful and obedient servant,

"W. C. Plunket."

There is no doubt, at all events, that Plunket on his part had for many years entertained the utmost respect and admiration for the man with whom circumstances had so often brought him into conflict.

The following letter effected the most complete reconciliation, and thenceforward Plunket spoke of Lord Londonderry in terms of the most affectionate respect.

[*Confidential.*]

Letter from Lord Londonderry to Mr. Plunket.

MY DEAR SIR, *Cray Farm, 8th January*, 1822.

The official despatches of this morning from the Lord Lieutenant having announced your appointment to the office of Attorney-General as finally arranged, I avail myself of the earliest occasion of expressing to you the great gratification afforded to me by this event.

The long and deep interest I have felt in the accomplishment of this measure has been well known to you. I may have been selfish in desiring it, from the powerful accession of strength which it was calculated to bring with it, in aid of my immediate duties in the House of Commons; but I trust you will give me credit for anxiously desiring it upon higher grounds of public utility, namely, the benefits which I am confident your high name and splendid talents are calculated to infuse into the councils of the empire, and especially into the administration of that most important branch of it with which we are both so closely connected.

You must allow me to look forward with additional satisfaction to the prospect this will afford me of culti-

vating your private, as well as public confidence, and I beg to assure you that it will be my study to deserve your friendship as well as your co-operation.

Believe me ever, my dear Sir,

With great regard and esteem,

Most sincerely yours,

LONDONDERRY.

Right Hon. W. C. Plunket.

From this correspondence the reader will perceive that Mr. Henry Goulbourne was sent over as Chief Secretary to Ireland expressly for the purpose of counteracting any excess of pro-Catholic feeling on the part of the Lord Lieutenant or the Attorney-General, and to represent the interest and keep up the spirits of the Protestant ascendancy. It may be easily supposed that the extreme men of both parties were incessant in their importunities for violent measures, and that while Mr. Goulbourne was besieged by polemical protests from Orange parsons, and requisitions from Orange magistrates, demanding stronger measures of repression against the "Papists," Mr. Plunket was on his part ceaselessly harried by Mr. O'Connell and his followers.

There is surely a curious proof of the extent to which the *odium theologicum* had impregnated the body of Irish politics in the formation of this cabinet, for it seemed that an impartial administration of the laws of England could only be had

in Ireland as the resultant of two clashing and nearly opposite religious forces in the administration. It would be difficult to imagine a more difficult position than that in which the law officers of the Crown were then placed, and I think it will be admitted that though he may have been guilty of some indiscreet zeal in his efforts to curb the violence of the Orange party, Mr. Plunket managed his business as Attorney-General with courage and justice.

For many reasons it was thought by the friends of the Catholics in the House of Commons, undesirable to submit their claims to Parliament in the year 1822, but Mr. O'Connell was of a different opinion. I extract a few passages from a very characteristic letter which he addressed to Mr. Plunket on the 4th of April (1822) :—

For my part, in the present state of England, Ireland and Europe, I cannot bring myself to believe that the Parliament would be mad enough to refuse a just claim. Do not mistake me—I do not say a word of this in the way of menace; we have been as humble and courteous in our petitions as we are really submissive in our inclinations. All are sincerely attached to the constitutional connexion with England. When I say we, I mean the Catholic clergy and Catholic gentry, including the upper class of farmers; but the people—the physical force—is ready to turn out, let them but have an occasion,—or give them officers and they will soon find an

occasion. I fear I tire you in thus candidly disclosing my hopes, wishes, and fears.

Lord Grenville saw this question from a different point of view.

Lord Grenville to Sir John Newport.

Dropmore, April 14, 1822.

MY DEAR NEWPORT,

. . . . . .

I have seen Plunket here, but only for a day. We had much talk about the question of his bringing forward the Catholic petition this year, or giving notice of it for the next, and on the result (though my opinion is of little value without more means of judging of the state of men and things than reaches us here) I remain convinced that the latter is the best course of the two to pursue.

Besides what arises from the distracted state of Ireland, and the consequences to be expected from that failure which we all know we must anticipate under the present circumstances, however we may deplore it; besides this, a consideration which weighs much with me is, that of the embarrassing state in which the Bill actually stood in the moment of its rejection last year. Had we carried the measure through that stage,—I forget which stage it was,—in which it was lost, there was every appearance that we should immediately have had to encounter petitions *against* it from the very body, or at least the ecclesiastical part of it, whom we professed to relieve, and recommended it to Parliament to conciliate. After this, can it be brought forward again without some distinct and *previous* explanation with the Irish hierarchy, to see whether there is *any* form of security to which they are willing to consent, for the

purpose of conciliation on their part, and in order to quiet alarms, which, though you and I think them groundless, do not the less really exist in very many upright and honourable minds; or whether the advocates of peace and union must make up their minds to bring conciliatory measures forward in the most unconciliatory form in which they can be presented?

What my decision would be even in that case (if *my* decision were worth talking of), I stated last year unequivocally in the House of Lords. I said that I should vote for the Bill with its securities, because it came up to us in that form, and was most likely to pass, and to be useful in that form; but that if it had come up to us without them, I should equally have voted for it in that shape. But this sentiment is by no means general even among those who supported that Bill; and I do believe that the omission of all securities would retard the ultimate success of the measure, perhaps for twenty or thirty years more; or which would be still worse, till some great calamity or alarm forces it upon an unwilling Parliament.

I am therefore fully convinced that justice cannot be done to the cause by bringing it forward now, nor until a distinct explanation is had with the Irish bishops, and if necessary with Rome, and a previous form of words settled with them to which they will consent; or until, on a full conviction of the impossibility of obtaining their consent to *any* form of words, the friends of this measure have had the opportunity of debating on the course to be followed for its success, it being understood that the advantage of holding out any security must be renounced.

The only fear which at all counterweighs this impression in my mind is that of seeing the measure in

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consequence of this decision wrested out of the hands in which it is now placed. But I think this will be sufficiently guarded against by the notice to be given of the measure for the next year, and by the confidence which the Catholic body place, and with so much reason, in Plunket as the individual most able on every account,—and most of all in his present situation—to be of service to them. If Plunket's first opinions should be conformable to these notions, there will then I think arise a very great advantage from the agitation of Canning's proposed motion, which will, I hope, command the active and earnest support of every friend of the cause. It rests on grounds so strong, that when thus separated from the more disputable (or at least what are thought more disputable) parts of the question, I really hardly guess where its opponents are to go even for the shadow of an argument.

I write to you so much at length on this subject because I know the deep interest you take in it, and the very unreasonable degree of importance you attach to my notions. But they are those of a person totally withdrawn from such matters, and it is long since I have written so much politics, and it will probably be long indeed before I do so again. Ever most affectionately yours,

G.

For the reasons above mentioned, the main measure of Catholic Emancipation was allowed to lie by during the year 1822; but Plunket spoke in the debate on Canning's Bill, to allow Roman Catholic peers to sit in the House of Lords, and again upon the kindred subject of the condition of Ireland, April 22nd, 1822, when Sir John Newport

made his annual motion for a committee to inquire into the state of that country.

I will quote a few sentences from his speech on the latter occasion. He spoke late in the debate, having lain in wait for Mr. Ellis—the Irish Master in Chancery, who had defeated Henry Grattan's son for the representation of Dublin city, and who, as Plunket no doubt had anticipated, gave an ample display of the virulent spirit, which unfortunately at that day disgraced a considerable section of the Irish Protestants.

Mr. Plunket said :—

In the few remarks I have to make I will confine myself strictly to the question before the House. It is far from my intention to follow the honourable and learned gentleman who spoke last, through the details of his disgusting attack upon the population of that country which has returned him to Parliament. When that learned member first abandoned his duties in the Irish Court of Chancery, without any prospect of rendering services in this part of the kingdom which might console his countrymen for his absence, I felt and expressed great regret; but I now withdraw, from the bottom of my heart, every regret on that account, and hail the appearance of that gentleman on this night as calculated to display to the British Parliament, and in the face of the whole country, the tone, and temper, and manner adopted towards the great body of the people of Ireland by some of those who ought to be the advocates of their rights. It is often asked in a tone of triumph by the enemies of the Catholics, "Why are you not satisfied

with the boon granted to you? Why are you not content with the concessions which you have received?" The reason is because concessions have been followed in every stage by the curses and maledictions of those bigots whose prejudices neither time nor circumstances can remove; which, like an unwholesome blight—like a destructive mildew—have fastened on the boon, whether it proceeded from royal favour or legislative beneficence.

In the following passage he refers to his conduct in opposing the Act of Union:—

I beg leave to say that some of my honourable friends have drawn too gloomy a picture of the past condition of Ireland, when they spoke of an uninterrupted misgovernment of three centuries. Within the latter part of this period they might have found many subjects of consolation. Had their observations been confined to the time when the penal code was in full operation, I should not have questioned their correctness, for no one more abhors than I do that odious and vicious system; but, one by one those abominable statutes have been repealed, and nothing now remains but one great measure of policy and justice that shall remove all civil disabilities on account of religious faith. It should also be recollected, that since the year 1782 that country has been restored to commerce and to all the commercial rights enjoyed in other parts of the empire. These advantages have been followed by an union which placed Ireland on a footing with Great Britain, in all other privileges and rights. As an Irishman I opposed that union; as an Irishman I avow that I did so openly and boldly—nor am I now ashamed of what I then did; but though in my resistance to it, I had been prepared to go the length of any man, I am now equally prepared to do all in my power to render it close and

indissoluble. One of the apprehensions on which my opposition was founded, I am happy to say, has been disappointed by the event. I had been afraid that the interests of Ireland, on the abolition of her separate legislature, would come to be discussed in a hostile Parliament; but I can now state,—and I wish when I speak that I could be heard by the whole of Ireland,—that during the time that I have sat in the united Parliament, I have found every question that related to the interests or security of that country entertained with indulgence, and treated with the most deliberate regard. When I remember all these things,—when I call to mind the privileges granted, and the disabilities removed,—and when I consider the effects that must result from the cordial efforts of a united legislature, I cannot entertain gloomy ideas on the subject of the future prospects of Ireland. If an improved system of police were established in that country, and if the landed gentry discharged with zeal the duties of their character and station, we should soon see a manifest amelioration of the state of the sister island, and should find that, instead of being a source of weakness and distraction, it would become an arm of security and strength to the whole empire.

Plunket had not long enjoyed the office of Attorney-General when his predecessor, Mr. Saurin, was placed in a very unpleasant predicament by a curious disclosure. The following letter, in Saurin's handwriting, was picked up in the street* by some one who, being a friend of the

* Such is the account given of this discovery by O'Connell, in the note in which he enclosed Saurin's letter to Mr. Plunket. The story is told differently by Sheil, in his sketch of Lord Norbury :—

Catholic cause, was naturally an enemy to the late Attorney-General. The finder of the letter placed it in the hands of O'Connell, who immediately forwarded it to Mr. Plunket, with a request that he would take up the matter in his official capacity. Internal evidence fixes the date of Saurin's letter in 1821.

Mr. Saurin (Attorney-General), to Lord Norbury (Chief Justice of the Common Pleas).

DEAR LORD NORBURY, *Dublin, August* 9.

I transcribe for you a very sensible part of Lord Rosse's letter to me :—

"As Lord Norbury goes our circuit, and as he is per-

"Lord Norbury has been always remarkable for his frugality ; he was in the habit of stuffing papers into the old chairs in his study, in order to supply the deficiency of horse-hair, which the incumbency of eighty years had produced in their bottoms. At last, however, they became, even with the aid of this occasional supplement, unfit for use, and were sent by his lordship to a shop in which old furniture was advertised to be bought and sold. An individual of the name of Monaghan got one of these chairs into his possession, and finding it stuffed with papers, drew them out. He had been a clerk in an attorney's office, and knew Mr. Saurin's handwriting ; he perceived by the superscription of a letter that it was written by the Attorney-General, and on opening it he found the following words addressed to a Chief Justice and a going Judge of Assize by the principal law officer of the Crown." The letter is given above.

When this letter was first disclosed, it was vehemently asserted by Mr. Saurin's friends, that a man of his position and constitutional principles could not have written it, and they alleged that it was a mere fabrication ; but afterwards, when the handwriting was perceived to be indisputable, and the author of the letter did not dare to deny its authenticity, Mr. Peel and the other advocates of Mr. Saurin contented themselves with exclaiming against the mere impropriety of its production.

From this ground of imputation they were, however, effectually driven by Mr. Brougham, when he called to the Minister's recollection, and especially to that of the Secretary for the Home Department, whom it chiefly concerned, the foul means adopted to get at evidence against the Queen.

fectly acquainted with the gentlemen of our country, a hint to him may be of use. He is in the habit of talking individually to them in his chamber at Philipstown, and if he were to impress upon them the consequence of the measure, viz., that however they may think otherwise, the Catholics would, in spite of them, elect Catholic members (if such were eligible), that the Catholic members would then have the nomination of the sheriffs, and in many instances, perhaps, of the judges, and that the Protestants would be put in the background, as the Catholics were formerly, I think he would bring the effect of the measure home to themselves, and satisfy them that they could scarcely submit to live in the country if it were passed."

So far, Lord Rosse; but what he suggests in another part of his letter is, "That if Protestant gentlemen who have votes, and influence, and interest, would give these venal members to understand that if they will purchase Catholic votes by betraying their country and its constitutions, they shall infallibly lose them, it would alter their conduct, though it could neither make them honest or respectable."

If you will judiciously administer a little of this medicine to the King's county, or any other members of Parliament that may fall in your way, you will deserve well.

I spoke to Moore relative to the O'Brien suit. He must get fee for the brief and be satisfied. I shall take care of it.

Many thanks for your letter and its good intelligence from Maryborough. Jebb is a most valuable fellow, and of the sort that is much wanted.

Affectionately and truly yours,

WM. SAURIN.

Plunket refused to have anything to do with the publication of this document, though O'Connell again pressed him earnestly to interfere.

Mr. Daniel O'Connell to Mr. Plunket.

Merrion Square, 1st July, 1822.

MY DEAR SIR,

I had the honour to receive your letter of the 25th of June, and am sincerely sorry to see that you think that the plain evidence of a foul and most dangerous crime—the perversion of the administration of justice to political purposes—should be sacrificed to some notion of etiquette; I am indeed very sorry for it.

I hope and trust, that if any Catholic had been guilty of an attempt to corrupt a judge, and to pervert the administration of so sacred a thing as public justice to any purpose injurious to the State, or even to the meanest Protestant in that State, such Catholic would be prosecuted with the utmost rigour of the law. In the case of a Catholic so offending, I should be desirous that the usual modes of obtaining evidence of secret conspiracies—the giving rewards to any associate who would betray and prove guilt—would be resorted to. Such crimes require and justify the hiring, at wages, that kind of treachery which all honest men abhor, but must make use of, otherwise secret conspiracies would go unpunished. In the case of an offending Catholic, I should hope that his crime would be thus sifted, detected, and punished. I am not so foolish or so uncandid as to assert that the case of a Protestant who conspires to injure the Catholics' case in the present temper of society in these countries, and under the present system, with at least one-half of the administration in both decided enemies of Catholic

rights and liberties—I am not, I say, so foolish and uncandid as to assert that under such a system the crimes of Catholics and Protestants against each other should be weighed in the same scales of gold,—neither theory nor practice would warrant me to say so; but yet *this* is so plain, so distinct, so enormous an offence—the evidence of it has been procured in so guiltless a way—no reward, no price has or can, by any the remotest possibility, be now or hereafter paid for it. It is handed to us by that kind of chance which is sometimes absurdly, and at other times, perhaps, piously called "providential." It furnishes so strong, so striking a feature in the causes of Irish misery, that I cannot bring myself to believe but that on reflection you will see the necessity, or at least the propriety, of not allowing these offenders to escape.

Under these circumstances I feel it to be my duty again—and in the most respectful manner possible—to tender you the copy of this letter, and to offer you the proof of the original; and also of the manner in which it has been procured.

I am happy that, as this letter is addressed to you merely as a public man on a public subject, it does not require any reply. Its contents are dictated by perhaps a mistaken, but certainly a strong as well as a painful sense of public duty. I wish the manner of performing that duty could sufficiently express the unfeigned respect with which

I have the honour to be, dear Sir,

Your most obedient,

Most humble servant,

DANIEL O'CONNELL.

To the Right Hon. W. C. Plunket.

A striking instance of the political arrogance that once disgraced the loyalty of many Irish Protestants, was exhibited shortly after the beginning of the Wellesley viceroyalty. So soon as the Orangemen of Dublin understood that the new Lord Lieutenant had come to Ireland for the express purpose of breaking down their old "ascendancy," they determined to shew that they would not submit to the new system without a struggle.

Two circumstances occurring in the summer of 1822 largely contributed to stimulate their zeal against the innovators of their ancient privileges.

In the first place, George IV., when accepting an invitation to a dinner at the Dublin Mansion House, had stipulated that the accustomed toast of "The pious, glorious and immortal memory" of William III. should not be given; and again, Lord Wellesley had forcibly prevented the dressing of King William's statue in College Green on the 12th of July, a mummery in which the Orangemen had annually indulged, in commemoration of the Battle of the Boyne. The latter considered that their most sacred feelings had been violated, and forthwith planned revenge. An opportunity of shewing their spirit was soon afforded them, by a visit which the Lord Lieutenant paid to the Dublin Theatre. On this occasion an organized

party of Orangemen, numbering nearly a hundred, packed the pit and upper gallery of the theatre, and having caused much interruption and disturbance throughout a portion of the performance, and having used the most offensive language, such as "Down with the Popish Government," "A groan for the Popish Lord Lieutenant," even went so far as to throw several heavy missiles at his Excellency, who sat in the Royal box, one of which striking the cushion, within a few feet of which Lord Wellesley sat, rebounded on to the stage. A heavy whisky-bottle was also aimed in the same direction and narrowly missed its object, from which circumstance this most disgraceful affair is still remembered in Dublin by the name of the Bottle Riot. About a dozen of the ring-leaders were apprehended, and several of them admitted their part in the transaction, and seemed to glory in their complicity in it. A very strong case was made out by the Crown against the transgressors, but the grand jury ignored all the bills, and Plunket felt himself compelled to file *ex-officio* informations against the powerful delinquents. A day was appointed for a trial at Bar, and its arrival was expected with the deepest anxiety. Mr. Sheil has described the appearance which the Court House presented to him when the traversers were put forward :—

There was not a murmur in the Court; but the first glance at the auditory would have satisfied you that deep passions were working there, and could not long be hushed. The signs of this were most apparent in the galleries. You saw it in the scowling brows of the Orange partisans—and few else were there;—in the compressed lip—in the roll of ferocious confidence with which their eyes went round the scene that reminded them of their strength—in the glare of factious recognition with which they greeted the accused, and assured them of a triumph. My eye next rested upon the crowded benches of the Bar. They, too, betrayed a consciousness of being themselves upon their trial. Instead of the legal *nonchalance* with which they usually await the coming on of the most important cause, they now presented a series of countenances quivering with political resentment. Of all the classes in the community, this body had felt, perhaps, the most intensely the late determination to control the pretensions of the Protestant ascendancy; for with them all prescriptive privileges had been most complete and undisputed. It was easy to trace their emotions in their looks—in the fixed and deadly sneer—in the flush of haughty indignation—in the impassioned gestures, with which, in whispers among themselves, they arraigned the whole proceeding, and foretold the disasters it would bring upon the land.

It seems fated that in this tragi-comic nation, however a public proceeding may terminate, it should not pass away without many a hearty laugh. In the present instance the business of the day opened with a joke. Mr. Plunket rose "to call the attention of the Court to a matter of some importance:"—a dead silence prevailed. The Attorney-General proceeded with much gravity to state "that he had been anxiously awaiting

the arrival of his colleagues, the Solicitor-General and Mr. Serjeant Lefroy; and that after a long search for them in all directions, it had been just discovered that they were both in one of the avenues of the court, firmly wedged in among the populace, with a prospect of immediate suffocation, unless their lordships should be pleased to interfere in their behalf!" The political tenets of the two learned sufferers were well known; and the most bigoted Orangeman in the galleries could not refrain from a loud giggle at the notion of two such personages writhing under the horrors of a popular embrace. The Chief Justice (Bushe) contrived to draw the veil of judicial gravity over the rising smile, while he gave the necessary orders.

Mr. Plunket then stated his case with great courage and skill to a jury who, as he felt morally certain would, under no circumstances, convict the accused. In the following extract will be found that well-known panegyric on William of Orange, a prince whose character and career Mr. Plunket all through his life regarded with a species of hero-worship :—

It is impossible to lay this case truly before the public without briefly reverting to the political events in which the conspiracy originated.

The foundations of it were laid so long back as the period when his Majesty was pleased to honour this country with his presence.

It is not, my lords, my intention to occupy your time by attempting a description of what took place on that

occasion. From the minds of those who witnessed the transaction, the splendour and glory of that day never can be effaced. To those who have not, no powers of mine can give an adequate description. It falls to me to have the less pleasing task of remarking, that even then some indications were to be found that his Majesty's gracious dispositions were not likely to be met with that degree of gratitude and respect to which they were entitled, and that even before he left the Irish shore the elements of mischief were at work. It was understood that the King, before he honoured the Mansion House with his presence, had signified his desire that the "glorious memory" should not be given as a toast. I must entreat your excuse, my lords, (it connects itself intimately with the matter of this trial,) if I advert more particularly to this topic, and endeavour to disabuse the public mind upon the subject.

Perhaps, my lords, there is not to be found in the annals of history a character more truly great than that of William the Third. Perhaps no person has ever appeared on the theatre of the world, who has conferred more essential or more lasting benefits on mankind; on these countries certainly none. When I look at the abstract merits of his character, I contemplate him with admiration and reverence. Lord of a petty principality; destitute of all resources but those with which nature had endowed him; regarded with jealousy and envy by those whose battles he fought; thwarted in all his counsels; embarrassed in all his movements; deserted in his most critical enterprises—he continued to mould all those discordant materials, to govern all those warring interests, and merely by the force of his genius, the ascendancy of his integrity, and the immovable firmness and constancy of his nature, to combine them into an

indissoluble alliance against the schemes of despotism and universal domination of the most powerful monarch in Europe, seconded by the ablest generals, at the head of the bravest and best disciplined armies in the world, and wielding, without check or control, the unlimited resources of his empire. He was not a consummate general—military men will point out his errors; in that respect fortune did not favour him, save by throwing the lustre of adversity over all his virtues. He sustained defeat after defeat, but always rose *adversa rerum immersabilis unda.* Looking merely at his shining qualities and achievements, I admire him as I do a Scipio, a Regulus, a Fabius; a model of tranquil courage, undeviating probity, and armed with a resoluteness and constancy in the cause of truth and freedom which rendered him superior to the accidents that control the fate of ordinary men.

But this is not all: I feel, that to him, under God, I am, this moment, indebted for the enjoyment of the rights which I possess as a subject of these free countries; to him I owe the blessings of civil and religious liberty, and I venerate his memory with a fervour of devotion suited to his illustrious qualities and to his godlike acts.

Did our gracious sovereign come here to trample on the memory of the most illustrious of his predecessors? No, my lords; the high errand on which he landed on our shores was worthy of him, and bespoke a kindred mind to that of the immortal personage whose name and character he vindicated. He knew that the whole life of King William was a continued struggle against intolerance; that the policy of his reign was opposed, and his most favourite objects for the peace and happiness of his people were baffled by the folly and bigotry of those who surrounded him; and that the career of his

glorious life was obstructed, as the lustre of his glorious memory has been tarnished, by the absurd and intolerant dogmatism of those who had been rescued by his exertions from that yoke which they sought, in opposition to his eager wishes, to impose on others. It was the unhappy but inevitable result of the circumstances in which the people of this unfortunate country were placed, that they had to meet that great man, not as subjects, but as enemies. The peculiar good fortune of the British people was, that every feeling of religion corresponded with their innate love of freedom to alienate them from the cause of the exiled monarch. His designs, his determinations against their civil and religious liberties, were notorious and unalterable. An inflexible bigot and despot, he was too intense in both characters to endure the appearance of a compromise with toleration or with freedom. Yet every man knows through what difficulties and dangers they had to struggle before the house of Brunswick was firmly seated on the throne. Even with the full tide of religion running in their favour, the principle of loyalty to an hereditary succession was so indigenous to the British character, that it was not until after the lapse of nearly a century that the principle of Jacobitism was finally subdued.

But in unhappy Ireland the exiled King was the professor and patron of the religion to which they were enthusiastically devoted. He must be a preposterous critic who will impute as a crime to that unhappy people that they did not rebel against their lawful king, because he was of their own religion, even if they had been so fully admitted to the blessings of the British constitution as to render them equally alive to the value of freedom. They seemed, therefore, by the nature of things, almost necessarily thrown into a state of resistance; nothing

could have saved them from it but so strong a love of abstract freedom as might subdue the principles of loyalty and the feelings of religion. No candid man can lay so heavily on poor human nature; nor fairly say, that he thinks worse of the Roman Catholic, for having on that day abided by his lawful sovereign and his ancient faith. What was the result? They were conquered—conquered into freedom and happiness—a freedom and happiness to which the successful result of their ill-fated struggles would have been destructive. There is no rational Roman Catholic in Ireland who does not feel this to be the fact. Even the name of the exiled family is now unknown; the Throne rests on the firm basis of the unanimous recognition of the entire people. The memory of their unfortunate struggles is lost in the conviction of the reality of those blessings, which have been derived from their results equally to the conqueror and to the conquered. What wise or good man can feel a pleasure in recalling to the minds of a people so circumstanced the fact that they have been conquered? What but the spirit of folly and of mischief can take a satisfaction in interrupting them in the enjoyment of the blessings of their defeat, by taunting them with the recollection that they were defeated? Why is conquest desirable to any one but the trooper? Because it opens the way to peace and harmony; but to those I have now to deal with, the fruits of the conquest are valueless, without the perpetuation of the triumph.

He is a mischievous man who desires to remind the people of this country that they are a conquered people. He is a mischievous man who, for the gratification of his own pride, desires to celebrate, in the midst of that people, the anniversary of their conquest. Never was

there a subject more loudly calling for and justifying the gracious and saving interposition of the royal wisdom.

A very strong case was made in evidence in support of the case stated by Mr. Plunket, but after the trial had lasted many days the jury were discharged without having agreed to a verdict.*

* Mr. Plunket's eulogium of William III. was no doubt introduced with a view of conciliating the Orangemen, who mustered strongly upon the jury, but the position he thus took up was very skilfully turned by Mr. North, one of the prisoner's counsel, in the following passages, which afford a perfect specimen of the ornate school of eloquence :—"Gentlemen of the jury,—When such were my feelings,—thinking as I do, and with the political sentiments which I entertain, and having my views upon the great subject of Catholic claims,—what, I leave you to suppose, were the feelings of men who thought differently from me,—who believed that Protestant rights and Protestant privileges, and all that is meant by Protestant ascendancy, were main props and pillars of the British constitution, and that without them there was no security for Protestant property or peace? What, I ask you, were likely to be their feelings? The Attorney-General has done justice to them; he has pourtrayed the character and sketched the history of King William. I shall not attempt to follow him there; I shall not enter into any such vain and foolish emulation: I might as well think to shoot arrows at the sun. Gentlemen, you have heard that fine description. The Attorney-General has laid his offering on the altar of King William,—an offering of his own workmanship, fresh from the mint of his transcendant genius, and glowing with all those divine attributes and Godlike qualities which the powers of a sublime eloquence enabled him to stamp upon it. But let him not, therefore, sneer at the poorer offering of humbler men to the same object of their worship; his gift was one every way worthy of him, suited to his extraordinary talents, his refined taste and superior education: but we are taught to believe that the rude wonder of the shepherds was as acceptable as the gold, frankincense and myrrh of the Eastern kings. The Attorney-General has taunted these poor men with their want of taste; the sashes and scarfs with which they decorated the statue were tawdry and vulgar it seems, and the mantua-maker of King William, as he termed him, did not adjust his millinery as well as he might. But, gentlemen, this is not a point of taste, it is a matter of feeling: the soldier in the field of battle clings with as much devotion and fidelity to his tattered colours, as if they displayed the painting of Rubens, or the designs of Raphael. I therefore claim for these men what the Attorney-General has

Great excitement prevailed, and very violent speeches and articles were spoken and written in consequence of the exaggerated statements circulated as to the extent to which Plunket had acted unconstitutionally in filing "*ex-officio* informations." Saurin, who ought to have been the last man to criticise his conduct, was the prime instigator in this outcry. He carried his hostility into the House of Commons, and Mr. Brownlow, afterwards Lord Lurgan, gave notice of a motion,

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demanded for himself: I claim for them the right to express in their own homely dialect, and after their own vulgar and tasteless manner, if you will have it so, their respect for the memory of King William, and their gratitude for the benefits which he has conferred upon them and on their country. But such sentiments or such expression of them, you may tell me, are not justified by philosophy and reason,—and if you will argue the point with me like metaphysicians or professors, perhaps I shall be compelled to admit that they are not: but be it that they are not reason,—I tell you they are nature. There is a principle implanted in the human breast for the highest and the noblest purposes, that by attractions which we cannot always explain, but which we never can resist, draws us together into bands and companies of kindred feeling; sometimes it is the recollection that we are sprung from the same endeared and consecrated soil—sometimes the spirit-stirring thought that we have drawn our loyal swords in defence of the same sovereign and the same law, or perhaps the touching remembrance that we have bowed together before the altar of a common faith: whatever they may be, they are the links that join heart to heart—the fine cords that bind man to man—that are as sensitive as they are strong, and never yet were broken with impunity. If the Attorney-General had consulted the illustrious person at the head of his Majesty's Government in this country, he would have told him that even the feeble, pliant Hindoo, who bows his neck beneath the yoke of every conqueror, Christian and Mahometan, Tartar and European, will not permit one darling rite, one ancient usage, one cherished prejudice to be touched, revolted, or disturbed. Not Tamerlane nor Zingis, not Clive nor Wellesley, in the plenitude of their power, ever dared to assail him in the sanctuary of his feelings;—and shall Irishmen endure in tame and uncomplaining submission what would not be borne by the feeble and enslaved Hindoo?"

which, if carried, would have amounted to a vote of censure upon Mr. Plunket. Never, perhaps, did any man in that House in one short speech so completely alter the feelings of his audience. Except a few personal friends there was scarcely one present who did not believe, when Plunket commenced his speech, that he had, to favour his party, violated the constitution; and there were some who thought that in doing so he had strained his conscience for the purpose of promoting his private ends. The press had teemed with abuse of him. The Orange party in Ireland, indignant at the attempt to curb their habitual licence, thought that their hour of vengeance had come; and their cause was warmly taken up by their numerous friends in the House of Commons, while on the other hand the majority of the opposition, irritated with the party to which Mr. Plunket belonged for their late adhesion to the Government, felt little disposed to shield him from censure, however much they sympathized in the motives that had prompted him in the conduct for which he was arraigned. Even the administration (a large portion of which had never been friendly to the policy of Lord Wellesley) were not united in his support. Plunket fully felt the overwhelming difficulties of his critical position. As he walked down to the

House with his friend Mr. Anthony Blake, on the evening appointed for Mr. Brownlow's motion, he was obliged to lean upon him for support, so much was he shaken by the violence of his emotions and the effort that was necessary to subdue his burning indignation, and to regain the calmness which the occasion so much required. He frequently exclaimed to Mr. Blake, "I feel like a man going out to execution under an unjust sentence."

Mr. Brownlow brought on his motion in a speech of great moderation, and even of considerable force and persuasive power. He concluded, leaving the House under the impression that Mr. Plunket had done a most unconstitutional and uncalled-for act of executive tyranny, to justify party ill-feeling; not only this, but it was unmistakeably implied that he had violated his oath and his trust as Attorney-General, for the purpose of advancing his own private interests.

Then it was that this old man rose up to vindicate the character that he had kept unsullied during thirty years of public life. At first he stumbled and laboured through his sentences, as he often did at the commencement of his most splendid efforts. The House received him with indifference, almost with coldness; gradually, as

he commenced his defence and his spirit was fired by a sense of this unwonted distrust, he rolled forth mass after mass of unanswerable reasoning. The audience could not deny the justice of the cause—they believed the honesty of the man, and caught by the infection of his enthusiasm, the House that had listened to his opening words in silence, re-echoed with applause, which was increased at the close of each paragraph of the great argument; and when at length he closed it with these simple words,—"My public conduct and private character have been alike assailed. I will retire, so that the House may more freely and unrestrainedly consider the question. My public conduct I consign to the justice of this House, my private character I leave to its honour;"—it was felt that he had completely vindicated himself. After a short discussion, in which the English Attorney-General declared his entire concurrence with Mr. Plunket in his conduct and his reasoning, the House proceeded to the orders of the day, on the motion of Mr. Canning, who said "he did not wish to give a triumph to either party." Mr. Plunket considered that Mr. Canning had not acted fairly by him in this respect, and for some time spoke very bitterly of his conduct. He, however, had the satisfaction of

receiving the warm approbation of his old friend Lord Grenville.*

Letter from Lord Grenville to Mr. Plunket.

Dropmore, April 17, 1823.

MY DEAR SIR,

I cannot resist the desire I feel of expressing to you in these few lines that of which, even without them, I trust you would not have doubted—the sincere and heart-felt pleasure I derive from your complete and decisive triumph; and not less from the sense how much you are indebted for it to your own brilliant exertions, and to the manly tone and temper of your speech.

I still fear that the irritation of this subject is not at an end, either here or in Ireland, but a better beginning could not have been made than by the impression which you have produced on the House.

Ever, my dear Sir,

Most truly and faithfully yours,

GRENVILLE.

Another triumph was still in store for him, though of a more personal nature. It was discovered that Mr. Saurin had, while Attorney-General, filed but a few years before in Ireland "*ex-officio* informations," when true bills could not be procured by means of the grand jury. When Mr. Plunket had an opportunity of making this disclosure to the House, it created the utmost astonishment, for it was well known that Saurin

* The reporters preserved but a confused outline of Mr. Plunket's argument, and as the discussion of the legality of *ex-officio* proceedings has now become obsolete, I have determined not to print this speech.

had been the prime mover in all the proceedings against Plunket. It was long before the irritation caused in the public mind by the Bottle Riot and its consequences were quite obliterated, but this irritation was in a great measure the outward crisis of a radical alteration in the system of governing Ireland.

CHAPTER III.

LORD WELLESLEY'S POLICY—FRIENDSHIP OF LORD WELLESLEY—TWO HIGH-MINDED STATESMEN—A LIFE-LONG FRIENDSHIP—LORD WELLESLEY'S GRATITUDE—THE SOLICITOR-GENERAL'S SPECIFIC—AN "ALARMIST" LETTER—LETTER FROM BUCKINGHAM—ADVICE OF CANNING—TREATMENT OF LORD WELLESLEY—EDUCATION OF THE PEOPLE—THE IRISH CHURCH QUESTION.

THE reader has no doubt already perceived in the circumstances connected with Mr. Plunket's abortive attempt to bring the Bottle riòters to justice, indications of the stubborn spirit and great resources by which he and Lord Wellesley were opposed in their efforts to break down the power and humble the pride of the Orange party in Ireland. It had been the darling object of Mr. Saurin throughout the fifteen years during which he was nominally Attorney-General, and virtually Chief Governor, to maintain the energies of that party, and he had freely used the patronage and power of the Crown to consolidate their strength. They were, therefore, in an admirable state of preparation to resist any attack upon their privileges, even had they not found

very zealous and efficient defenders in the Chief Secretary (Mr. Goulbourne) and the Solicitor-General (Mr. Joy).*

But the open hostility of the Orangemen and their friends was not the only difficulty by which the policy of Lord Wellesley and Mr. Plunket was impeded. The attitude of the Roman Catholics was almost as embarrassing. In the political reasonings of the Lord Lieutenant and the Attorney-General, it had been publicly admitted that the Roman Catholics had been unjustly oppressed; their friends were now in power and they demanded reprisals against their former oppressors. Such a desire was under the circumstances natural, but it could not of course be gratified. They were entitled to and were to have an even-handed administration of the

* Mr. Saurin's government was considered not sufficiently Protestant by some politicians. Lord Redesdale, writing to Lord Colchester, Oct. 30, 1823, says:—"Twenty years of mismanagement have so increased the evil to be overcome that I fear force alone can never subdue the bad spirit which almost universally prevails. It is idle to talk of ameliorating the condition of a people not obedient to law until they shall first have been made obedient to law. The government of a dictator, wise and well-judging, assisted by a great armed force ready to execute his will, is now become necessary to the peace of Ireland—a Cromwell at the head of such an army as he had, not subject to the controul of a cabinet in England. Where is to be found such a man? Where is to be found such an army? And how is the government of such a man, if found, to be rendered independent of a cabinet here?" When it is remembered that the writer was a man of considerable ability and great experience in Irish affairs—having been Chancellor of Ireland from 1802 to 1806—such an opinion is a curious illustration of the views held on the subject by the party to which Lord Redesdale belonged.

existing laws, and nothing more. Further, it was the leading idea of this new system of governing Ireland, that the loyalty of the Roman Catholics should be secured by calling out sentiments of affection for the existing institutions, and by promoting amongst them feelings of brotherly love towards their Protestant fellow-subjects. But why should people support a constitution under which they were ineligible to the most dearly prized honours of the State? And how could they be expected to feel brotherly love towards men who daily heaped on them the most opprobrious insults? Many of the complaints of the Catholics by which the Castle of Dublin was daily besieged were reasonable, but yet could not, as the law stood, be satisfied: but all their complaints, whether just or unjust, were urged by the eloquence and skill of such lay advocates as O'Connell and Sheil, and such ecclesiastical leaders as Bishops Doyle* and Murray, and were

* The Right Rev. John Doyle, titular Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, was, next to O'Connell, the most remarkable Irishman brought into notice by the agitation of the Roman Catholic Relief question. He was remarkable for learning, piety, and amiability in his private life; and his political writings are extremely eloquent and forcible. The following passage from a letter, addressed by him to Lord Wellesley, in May, 1823, affords an example of the kind of warnings, if indeed they were not threats, with which the Catholic party often sought to intimidate his lordship. This is, I believe, the first occasion on which the change wrought amongst the Irish priesthood by the Maynooth Grant was noticed. "The Minister of England cannot look to the exertions of the Catholic priesthood: they have been ill-treated, and they may yield for a moment to the influence of nature,

backed by the physical strength of four-fifths of the nation. In the face of all these difficulties, Lord Wellesley and Mr. Plunket held honestly and courageously to the policy which they had marked out for themselves, and though often baffled by the fanaticism of bigots and turbulence of popular leaders, they brought their country safely through a fearful crisis, and shielded the cause they held so dear, on the one hand from the downright hostility of enemies, and on the other from the equally dangerous championships of impetuous friends: for at the period of the Wellesley vice-royalty any triumph of the Orange party or any excess of popular violence would have been alike fatal to the hopes of the Catholics. At that day the headstrong leaders of violent factions received the warm sympathy and echoing applause of their followers, while the approbation of the wise and

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though it be opposed to grace. This clergy, with few exceptions, are from the ranks of the people; they inherit their feelings; they are not, as formerly, brought up under despotic governments; they have imbibed the doctrines of Locke and Paley more deeply than those of Bellarmin, or even of Bossuet on the *Divine Right of Kings*; and they know much more of the principles of the constitution than they do of passive obedience." . . . Lord Wellesley at once obtained a document from Maynooth, signed by five of the professors, which was a kind of protest of loyalty on their part. O'Connell made these circumstances an occasion for moving a vote of thanks to Dr. Doyle, having eulogized collectively and individually the several professors who signed the declaration. O'Connell added: "But I do respectfully enter my protest against the political principles they announce, and I cannot allow that the professors of Maynooth, or the Catholics generally, have any great cause for gratitude, although bound to the Government by their allegiance."

just, who supported the policy of moderation, was "not loud but deep." But forty years have now gone by, and the violence of political and polemical wrath is remembered only to be despised, while the honest labours of calm and steadfast patriots have abiding monuments in the great results for which they cleared the way.

In carrying out this policy, there was between the Lord Lieutenant and his Attorney-General a complete identity of opinion, and out of their common efforts and constant intercourse on matters of business, there grew a private intimacy. The mutual sentiments of affectionate regard which existed between Lord Wellesley and Mr. Plunket will constantly appear in the letters which passed between them, and which I shall have occasion to introduce in these pages as marking out the course of their combined administration.

The reader will in this correspondence find many expressions of disappointment on the part of Lord Wellesley, at what he considered the ill-treatment he had received at the hands of the English Government and people, and will perceive that whilst the writer often asserts the *mens conscia recti* to be its own sufficient reward, he does not seem to feel that it is so; indeed, the language in which he sometimes writes might seem like that of querulous reproach, unless the peculiar character

of his mind, romantically sensitive to slight, and the peculiar circumstances of his position at the time, and of his former career, be borne in mind. The reader should remember that Lord Wellesley had spent the prime of his life in India in the service of his country, that he had there exercised an authority as absolute as a czar's, that he ruled over a country more populous than Europe, that he had added to the area of British territory, regions out of which England would not be missed; that he had not only enabled the revenue of our Indian Empire to bear its own burdens, but had actually cast ten millions into the public treasury; that through all this he had borne himself so nobly and faithfully that suspicion had never breathed upon his fair fame; and that he had in the end, with the simple grandeur of a Roman dictator, returned into the ranks of the citizens. No wonder then if a mind so nobly ambitious of public fame as that of Lord Wellesley felt itself chilled by the coldness of the welcome he received, and was deeply wounded by finding that England had not been marking his achievements while he was absent, and that when he returned the interest of the passing moment was considered more important than all the marvellous tales that his experience could produce.

I cannot resist the temptation of printing here

two specimens of a correspondence between Lord Wellesley and Sir John Newport which have come into my hands,* as they seem to me to throw a strong light upon the characters of these two high-minded statesmen. They were written many years after the transactions occurred with which I am at present dealing, and the reader must make allowance for the effect which must have been produced upon the minds of the writers, by the effort to recall, after a lapse of nearly seventy years, the events and the feelings of earliest youth, when as old men they were almost trespassing on the limits of a second childhood.

Marquis Wellesley to Sir J. Newport, Bart.

Kingston House, Knightsbridge,

February 28, 1840.

MY DEAR NEWPORT,

Lord Morpeth has, I perceive, alluded to my early obligations to you at Eton, but he has not done justice either to you or to me. *You* are the founder of my public character. *You* found me an idle boy, and by your instruction and example I was made diligent and studious, and inspired with that glorious passion for solid fame, that noble ambition to obtain power and honour by deserving them, which has been my "*Star of Arcadie*," my "*Tyrian cynosure*," through my long and active life, and which has raised me to a station impregnable

* I take this opportunity of acknowledging my obligations to Mr. Greene, of Kilkenny, for his courtesy in allowing me to avail myself of the papers of the late Sir John Newport, whose literary executor Mr. Greene is.

by slander, malice or faction. I acknowledge this—I am proud to acknowledge it; and I have everywhere and on all occasions boasted that to you I owe the foundation of my public character. But you did more: You must remember that you accompanied me from Eton to Dangan Castle, the seat of my ancestors, where you passed some time with my father and mother. Alas! frivolous and careless personages, like most of the Irish nobility of that time. You taught them to respect me and my literary pursuits, and to encourage me in the career of honour and glory to which you had first directed my steps. You were to me what my father might have been:

"Tu Pater es rerum inventor: tu Patria nobis suppeditas præcepta!"

Be assured that I can never forget my duty towards you, and that I shall always be happy to avail myself of every opportunity that I am,

My dear Newport,

Your sincere friend and faithful servant,

(Signed) WELLESLEY.

When I last saw you I expressed my desire to obtain from you a plain record of my character at Eton, of your first acquaintance with me, and of our subsequent friendship under all political vicissitudes. As I am anxious to leave behind me a faithful record of my life, such a communication from you would be most acceptable.—W.

[*Draft.*]

Sir J. Newport, Bart., to the Marquis Wellesley.

March 23rd, 1840.

You wish me, my dear lord, to enter upon the grateful task of recording my view of the earliest commencement of that association with your honoured name which has lasted with undiminished vigour through a long series of years, and by which I am so eminently distinguished.

How can I withdraw myself from such a pleasing duty, however incompetent to its execution. The lapse of nearly seventy years will have rendered the remembrance of those happy days less vivid in its details, but can never efface from my recollection the period when at the ages of thirteen and seventeen our earliest affections were united, and the boyhood of your lordship was connected with my somewhat more advanced years by the reciprocity of juvenile regard.

If at that time I had the good fortune, as your kindness states, to impress upon your youthful mind the sentiments of honour, the aspirings after imperishable fame, which have in any degree led to those glorious results that in your distinguished career through various quarters of the globe have marked your eventful life, how much ought I to desire to record in permanent characters this proud distinction.

Under Mrs. Young's great tree at Eton, the brotherhood, for such it truly was, of Wellesley, Grenville and Newport commenced, and lasted undiminished even to the latest years of our regretted friend, through every vicissitude of political life, and still subsists vigorously in the declining years of the survivors. It has been proof, on your part, against the estrangement usually created by elevation to rank and remoteness of removal. That the flame [illegible] your last kind and flattering letter has fully testified. May it so continue to the close of life.

I am affectionately yours.

It will be easily understood how uncongenial to such a mind as Lord Wellesley's the task must have been of presiding over an administration, which depended for its existence upon the

keeping up of a system of counterchecks amongst the opposing factions of the people; obliged, on the one hand, to face the insolence and violence of the Orange party, and, on the other, to countermine the schemes of Mr. O'Connell, whilst he was watched at every turn of his conduct by the various members of a divided Cabinet, the unanimous support of which he could hope to obtain on scarcely any question.*

The insults which had been offered to his representative dignity, and to himself personally, on the occasion of the riot in the Dublin theatre, made a very deep impression on his lordship's mind, and he felt much gratitude to Plunket for his resolute attempt to bring the offenders to justice.

[*Secret and confidential.*]

Letter from Lord Wellesley to Mr. Plunket.

Dublin Castle, Friday, March 21, 1823.

MY DEAR SIR,

I am deeply sensible of all your kindness towards me; and I trust that it is superfluous to assure you of my everlasting gratitude, and true, unalterable affection. Your generous attachment is one of my great consolations in this troublesome and thankless station, and

* Thus, in the end of the year 1824, when Plunket attempted to prosecute O'Connell for his famous "Bolivar" speech, he found it impossible to obtain evidence from the newspaper reporters, just as he had in the case of the Bottle rioters failed to obtain a verdict from the jury. The bills against O'Connell were again ignored, and some wit immediately dubbed the Attorney-General as "*Ignoramus* Plunket."

much as I rely on the matchless powers of your understanding, my main confidence rests on the purity, warmth, and kindly tenderness of your heart. Throughout whatever the space of life may be allotted to me (which I think and hope cannot be long) I trust that I shall be comforted by your private friendship, and supported and honoured by an indissoluble union and concert of public principle and sentiment. Much machination is working against your character through mine, much against mine through yours; neither can be mortally wounded by the weapons employed; but I declare to you that I would spurn any fame or honour unconnected with yours, and that I would revenge, as the most detestable personal insult, any attempt to disassociate our public characters in this Government.

I owe much gratitude to you for your kind letters. I have followed your advice in every point; but I really have not been able to write to you, nor can I now attempt to enter into any discussion of many matters of great public interest stated in your letters.

I must, however, urge a request which, however troublesome at this moment, it is my positive duty to press with the utmost assiduity, as well for your honour and interest as for those of the country. I ought not, perhaps, to add the considerations of my own indispensable and vital interests, and the existence of my government in Ireland. My anxious request is that you should come to Ireland immediately, even if you should not be able to remain more than a day. One hour's conversation between us would settle my mind, fix my course, and enable you clearly to view the dangers which are rising around us.

I declare most solemnly that if I cannot have the advantage of an early conversation with you, I must

(under my present feelings) resign this charge. I think you are not apprised of some matters which have been stated to me, but which I cannot commit to writing—these matters most deeply affect your public character and mine. Excuse me, therefore, if I solicit with great earnestness the favour of an interview with you as soon as may be practicable. Ever, dear Sir,

With much sincere respect and affection,
Yours faithfully,
WELLESLEY.

I cannot better illustrate the embarrassments which beset Mr. Plunket in performing his duties as Attorney-General in the years 1823–24, than by laying before the reader a few of the many interesting letters referring to that period which I have found amongst his papers. I have selected six, the writers of which held various social positions and very different opinions on the Irish politics of the day. The first is from Mr. Joy, Solicitor-General, representing the extreme Tory party in this piebald Government, whose favourite specific for Irish discontent was coercion :—

Letter from Mr. Joy to Mr. Plunket.

MY DEAR PLUNKET, *Temple Street, March 22.*

. . . . The magistrates apply for a military force. In my mind the Peace Preservation Bill must be applied along with the Insurrection Act. Our magistrates are not active. Even in Cork, as soon as the immediate danger is over, their energy subsides. A hired police

which is always on the alert, which shows itself in all places, which is not acted upon by local influences, and which does not sacrifice duty to etiquette, is what Ireland requires, and whoever can achieve the great measure of establishing such a system permanently throughout all Ireland will contribute more to the improvement of Ireland and the happiness of its people in twenty years, than without it can be hoped for in a century. . . . A letter from White of Cork mentions that several persons had come there from Limerick, with passports, in order to quit the country; that he had little doubt they were rebels, and had detained them till he could learn the wishes of Government. Gregory and I quite agreed, and his Excellency at once adopted the idea when mentioned by Gregory, that it would be very desirable, that as many as possible should leave the country, and that White should suffer them to proceed. I think this one of the most favourable symptoms of returning quiet. They are beginning to think it a bad speculation. The same thing took place in 1798, when the rebels began to lose hope. . . .

I am, my dear Plunket,

Yours very sincerely,

H. JOY.

Right Hon. W. C. Plunket, London.

The next is from Mr. Wynn, nephew to Lord Grenville, and a staunch friend of the Catholics.

[*Private and confidential.*]

Mr. Wynn to Mr. Plunket.

MY DEAR SIR,— *E. L. O., June 24, 1823.*

In addition to what I wrote last week, I cannot avoid again pressing upon you the extreme disadvantage

which arises to Ireland in general from the continued silence of the Lord Lieutenant. Since he wrote on the 20th May;—that he required nothing but the Insurrection Act, and, if I recollect right, another regiment, since sent,—not a line, official or private, has been received from him.

Meantime, the only intelligence which reaches the Cabinet is contained in Major Finch's reports to Sir Herbert Taylor, and private communications to Mr. Goulbourne, which, in the absence of other documents, are circulated; and you can easily guess with what colour both of these channels tinge the information.

We are told that the guards of the Castle have for some time been doubled, and may expect to-night,—on the Insurrection Act, and still more on Thursday, when Brougham brings forward his motion,—to be pressed with questions, both from the Opposition which sits in front of us, and that which occupies our right flank and the heights above us.

It is most evident that the latter party anticipate with expectation the breaking out of an insurrection, from which they expect a return to the old system of coercion, and they are very active in instilling the same expectations into their English friends.

The Session is drawing so near to an end, that if an explosion can be averted, I still hope that you may have the chance of what good may be effected by the measures of another year; but if it takes place I am under great apprehension that the Orange party may succeed in their efforts to establish on its suppression the former system of coercion for as long a period as it may be possible to maintain it.

Believe me, in great haste,

Most faithfully yours,

C. W. WILLIAMS WYNN.

Here is an "alarmist" letter from Mr. O'Connell :—

[*Private.*]

Mr. O'Connell to Mr. Plunket.

Merrion Square, Jan. 22nd, 1823.

MY DEAR SIR,

You will perhaps smile at the gravity with which I profess to have become an alarmist; but I cannot avoid having a strong belief that the Orangemen intend to make some exhibition of their force to overawe Lord Wellesley's Government. You well know that if such a thing is attempted, it is not in human nature that it should end in mere show. I have nothing of legal evidence, or even of a *tendency* to legal evidence, to offer to you on this subject. But I do myself believe it; more especially as Master Ellis and Mr. Saurin are so very active among their partisans. But these are matters on which, if there be any just reason for my *fears*, you must have better information than you could get from me, who, after all, *know* nothing, save from the sensation made amongst the Catholic population by this species of armed preparation of their Orange neighbours.

But my object is just to tell you, that should you deem it a wise and proper measure, it would be very easy to increase the yeomanry force of Dublin by a thousand or twelve hundred men, to be officered and armed by Government; but without any kind of pay. I believe the Opposition noblemen resident near Dublin would take the command; and I am certain that it would be easy to get unexceptionable gentlemen, half of them Protestants, the other half Catholics, to become

officers; and I will answer for the privates in forty-eight hours.

As they would take no pay, they would require to be called volunteers, not yeomanry. If you should deem the suggestion of any practical utility, you will make use of it; if not, forget it was made, and forgive me for taking up so much of your valuable time at this moment; and do not take the trouble of sending me any answer in the latter case.

I have the honour to be, very respectfully,
My dear Sir,
Your very faithful and obedient,
The Attorney-General. DANIEL O'CONNELL.

This letter is from the Duke of Buckingham, nephew to Lord Grenville, and since the retirement of the latter from politics, the recognized chief of his former followers:—

[*Confidential.*]

MY DEAR SIR, *Avington, Dec. 21st*, 1823.

I truly rejoice at the general tenor of the letter with which you have favoured me. All the accounts which I receive from Ireland confirm your report; and the rise of prices at the late fairs seems to have infused spirits throughout the land.

It appears to me that the greatest good has resulted from the establishment of the petty sessions, and I expect still more favourable effects from that most excellent measure. It is but fair to tell you, what you probably are well aware of, that the language of the supporters of the Orange party in our Government, and who consequently are classed under the general head of friends of the Administration, con-

tinues to be, in their own societies and circles, most offensive against Lord Wellesley and yourself. No increase of public prosperity will diminish the quantum of abuse against those who are the causes of it so long as they do not wear Orange ribands. This will continue and will have the most mischievous effects in Ireland, so long as the policy of the Government is to bear this unmoved, and let it pass unreproved and unpunished. A single example would do wonders; but *a single example* has not been made. If the lesson cannot be taught from prudential motives, by punishing the guilty, it should by showing marks of favour to their opponents. But neither has this been done. You assure me that Lord Liverpool's instructions and conduct are all that can be desired upon the subject. If so, is there a want of energy in the Irish Government? Or is the Secretary too strong for the Lord Lieutenant, even with a fair neutrality on the part of the ministers? Lord Wellesley's situation is much stronger than it was. The justice of his measures and his talents begin to be appreciated. Why should he suffer himself then to be run down by a race of vermin whom his breath would scatter and his eye wither? Allow me to beg of you to do your utmost in urging him to do but common justice to himself, and to those who support him.

I have no doubt of the Catholics remaining quiet so long as you continue in office. They are beginning to see the impolicy of endeavouring to gain factiously what has been too long withheld from them constitutionally. Instances are not wanting of their refusing to be held in shackles by their priests, and of their insisting upon having their children duly educated; telling their priests that they prefer them as their masters, if they will teach them; but if not, that they will go where they can get

their education for nothing. I am almost inclined to hope that their claims may not be pressed this session. The times are unfavourable to them, and repeated heavy defeats serve only to irritate and produce fresh feelings of injury. It will be advantageous, too, to teach them how much they owe to their priests, and the Radical part of the Opposition, in the House of Commons.

I have reason to believe the Duke of York's health to be bad. The attack which nearly killed him last winter has already returned, although in a slighter degree, and I know that his medical attendants are not easy about him.

* * * * *

Believe me always, my dear Sir,

With the greatest respect and regard,

Yours most faithfully,

BUCKINGHAM AND CHANDOS.

The Right Hon. the Attorney-General of Ireland.

The following letter is from George Canning, then Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and a firm friend of the Roman Catholic cause.

[*Private and confidential.*]

Gloucester Lodge, Dec. 27, 1823.

MY DEAR SIR,

. . . . . And now let me thank you for the distinct, and, upon the whole, satisfactory statement which you have been kind enough to give me of the present situation and prospect of Ireland.

I quite agree with you, as a *general principle*, that to impute ill designs is, nine times out of the ten, to confirm, if not to suggest, them; and that even where

they do exist, they are likely to be disarmed rather than encouraged, by a slowness to profess a belief in them.

Such a policy no way precludes preparation—but it removes in the suspected party that class of motives to action which consist in the knowledge that they *are* suspected, and in the apprehension that a *locus pœnitentiæ* is refused to them. I would be armed at all points; but I would not acknowledge (if I could help it I would not admit) an expectation of violence, either from Roman Catholics or Orangemen, till it actually broke out.

It strikes me that your burial dispute is the most difficult to settle. (The College of Surgeons here would be right glad to be called in as the umpires, for they complain bitterly that they cannot get subjects of any persuasion, for love or money).

I am very anxious to hear how the Tithe Bill of last session works; I suppose the amendment of it will be a great part of our Irish work this year.

From a communication made to me at the close of the last session, I venture to hope that our friends from that side of the water will be more generally and actively friendly than we found them in that session.

As to the *great question*, the state into which it has been brought is most unlucky. It is, however, that at which the Opposition have been aiming for years. *Their* object always was to make it a party question. As such I venture to predict it will never be carried—no, not if the party espousing it were to come into power.

Whether the Roman Catholics have lent themselves willingly to this change I have no means of knowing. I find their espousal by the Opposition has been in effect a forcible abduction. They (the Opposition) have

wedded the fortunes of the Catholics perforce to their own. And the more dishonestly, as they were themselves already wedded to another question—that of Parliamentary Reform.

I rejoice in the report which you make of the efficacy of Lord Wellesley's wise and merciful system of administration. I think it requires to be *understood here.* I am almost sure that there is in no quarter (here) any desire to counteract it. If it has fair play, I think it must do good, beyond even his own anticipations.

I have told Lord Wellesley that I venture to guarantee him against any external disturbance of his Government by wars or (anything like well-founded) rumours of wars from abroad.

Shall we see you at the beginning of the session?

Ever, my dear Sir,

With great esteem and regard,

Sincerely and faithfully yours,

GEORGE CANNING.

P.S.—Excuse the vileness of this handwriting. I write in bed, and at the end of a long and sharp fit of the gout; which, however, is happily taking its leave; and I hope will insure me for the session.—G. C.

In reading the following letter from Lord Wellesley, we must bear in mind that it was at the time strictly confidential, and that in it the writer therefore freely expressed his feelings of bitter resentment for the neglect with which he thought he had been treated, whilst nothing can be more reserved and dignified than the language of his official despatches :—

[*Private and confidential.*]

Right Hon. W. C. Plunket.

MY DEAR SIR, *Dublin Castle, March* 19, 1824.

I return a copy of your draft of the proposed Bill, with your recent amendments. I have made some notes in the margin, by which you will perceive that I am quite satisfied with the draft in its present form, suggesting merely some points for consideration. It is, however, necessary to apprise you that great ill temper is to be expected here, and, in addition to that, counteracting sentiments from honest men. This country is in the most tremendous condition, and I am left without support or countenance to submit to the kicks of the ass and the dirt of the monkey. The suppression of my despatch on this great question is an ignominy, an insult not to be endured. It is a sequel of the same plan of extinction, which, on the questions of the Statue, the Riot, the Orange, the Ribbon confederacies, by concealing my opinions, reduced me to the condition of a villain and slave on a mock throne, and rendered me an object of ridicule and contempt to a country which would have hailed me with respect and gratitude if I had not been crushed by pretended candour at Whitehall.

This letter is entirely for your most secret consideration, and, in the bosom of friendship, I think it right to impart to you my fixed resolution to resign this government the moment I learn the determination of the Cabinet not to lay my despatch of the 1st March before Parliament, without suppressing any part of it. This is a matter in which I would not wish to trouble you, beyond the mere notification to you of my intentions, which it would not be kind to conceal from so affectionate and respected a friend.

Pray assure Blake of my warm and grateful sense of his continued affection, and laborious and successful exertions for me, and let him know my intentions of quitting this country.

I am indeed most unhappy here—degraded, vilified, an object of scorn and detestation, without protection or even care; anxious to save the country; able to save it as far as relates to my own powers; frustrated, baffled, and betrayed by all my own agents; encompassed by traitors even at my own table; the whole machinery of my own government working to my destruction; and in England not the slightest symptom of a disposition to give me support or credit, but a contemptuous silence even of my name, and a contemptuous, if not treacherous suppression of my communications on the most important affairs of my government. From such a condition I pant for release. Although far gone in years, much broken in health, and much afflicted in spirit, I have powers enough remaining to meet any and all of my compeers in my place in the House of Lords; where I hope to appear before the Easter holidays, free from office and prepared for battle.

Finding that such prodigious alarm and hurry existed respecting the burials, I have sent a copy of the paper enclosed to Mr. Peel, and another to Mr. Goulbourne, and wishing you all well, and in the eager hope of a speedy release,

I remain ever, dear Sir,

Yours most affectionately,

WELLESLEY.

About this time the question of the education of the people of Ireland began to come very prominently forward. The following letter of Dr. Doyle, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, the ablest prelate

of the Roman Church of that day in Ireland, exhibits his views upon the subject. I also print Mr. Plunket's reply to him :—

Dr. Doyle to Mr. Plunket.

Old Derrig, Carlow,

SIR, *March* 16, 1824.

It is with great diffidence I presume to address you. I am induced to do so by the report which appeared in the newspapers of the observations you made in the House of Commons upon the petition of the Catholic bishops when it was presented there by Mr. Grattan * on some evening in the last week.

These reports vary, but one which was published in the *D. E. Mail* set forth, after some preliminary observations, that you disapproved of the prayer of the petition as "ungenerous, &c. . . ." which sought to separate children of different religious persuasions during their education.

Without attributing to newspaper reports more credit than is due to them, I fear the suggestion contained in the latter part of that petition might have led you to suppose that the Roman Catholic bishops were unwilling to coalesce with other religionists in seeking to promote the education of the people; and it is to remove that impression, should it exist in your mind, that I take the liberty of enclosing to you the resolutions of "The Irish National Society for the Education of the Poor," to which the most influential of the Catholic bishops have attached their names; as also to inform you that if in the late petition there was included a prayer for Parliamentary aid to be granted to the trustees of the Roman

* Mr. H. Grattan, junior.

Catholic College at Maynooth, that prayer was inserted in consequence of an authentic paper published on the part of the Kildare-place Society, at the close of Lord Talbot's administration, in which they disapproved of a suggestion contained in a paper presented to the Right Hon. C. Grant by my Lord Fingal and the late Doctor Troy. In that paper it was proposed that the Kildare-place Society should be induced by Government to admit amongst them the Roman Catholic bishops resident in Dublin, with some other individuals whom the Government would approve of, and so to regulate their proceedings that no book would be used in the schools assisted or to be assisted by the Government, to which some individuals of their committee would object.

It was also suggested in the same paper that "The Evangelical Life of Christ," and books containing the four Gospels with the Acts of the Apostles, *and without notes*, should be substituted in the room of the Sacred Scriptures for Catholic children in schools, so anxious were the Catholic prelates to make every sacrifice in their power for the purpose of having the youth of the country educated together.

And if in the late petition they sought for aid to be entrusted to the trustees of Maynooth College, they did so in consequence of finding that there was an entire unwillingness on the part of the committee of the Kildare-place Society to coalesce with them.

I trouble you with this detail not less for the purpose of removing from your own mind any unfavourable impression which the prayer alluded to of our petition may possibly have made, than with a hope of inducing you, when some convenient occasion may arrive, to state to the House what our real sentiments and wishes are.

I may be permitted to add my grateful acknowledg-

ment of your goodness to us in setting Mr. Dawson right on the subject of the appellation which is usually given to us, and which was used in our petition; and for the other favourable observations which you thought proper to make on that occasion; as also to assure you, that there is no class of his Majesty's subjects more anxious than we are to extinguish, if it were possible, every religious distinction, and to unite all classes of people in habits of concord and respectful deference to the constituted authorities.

I have the honour to be,

With every sentiment of respect,

Your most humble and most obedient servant,

J. DOYLE.

To the Right Hon. W. C. Plunket.

Mr. Plunket to Dr. Doyle.

SIR, *London, March 22nd,* 1824.

I have to acknowledge the honour of your letter of the 16th inst.; the term "ungenerous," which you mention as stated in the *D. E. Mail* to have been applied by me to the prayer of the petition of the Roman Catholic bishops, was certainly not used by me; what else may have been attributed to me in that paper I know not, as I have not seen the statement, or heard of it except from your letter. But I think it right to assure you that I expressed myself on that occasion, as I always do when the opportunity is afforded, in terms of high and unqualified respect for the truly respectable class of persons on whose behalf that petition was presented. I expressed strongly the opinions which I entertain: 1st, with respect to the importance of diffusing to all classes, without distinction of sect or party, the blessings of education and knowledge suited to their degree; 2nd, the absolute

necessity of blending religious with moral instruction; without which, in my opinion, the mere moral code of instruction is pernicious; 3rd, my decided hostility to this union being made the instrument of proselytism, against which I professed my readiness to guard and to concur for that purpose in any rational plan which could be suggested; but, 4th, I was under the necessity of expressing my entire dissent from the notion of establishing separate schools for the Protestants and Roman Catholics — such a measure in my opinion can tend only to disunion, and to the perpetuation of hostile feelings which every good man must wish to see obliterated. I do assure you that I give full credit to the Roman Catholic clergy as well for the desire to extinguish religious distinctions as for the deference to the constituted authorities which you attribute to them. As to the question with respect to the Kildare-place Society, I really am not sufficiently acquainted with the course of their proceedings to justify me in making any statement in the House of Commons on this subject; and I shall bring a very unprejudiced mind to any discussion which may arise concerning them. I am gratified that my observations on the title by which the petitioners designated themselves and the other observations made by me on their subject have been satisfactory to you. There certainly is no object which I have so much at heart as that of rendering justice to, and promoting harmony and Christian charity amongst all classes of his Majesty's subjects.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your very obedient servant,

W. C. PLUNKET.

As Mr. Plunket's views on the "Irish Church

Question" cannot fail to be interesting at the present day, I will now print the report (though a bad one) of what he said on this subject on the occasion of Mr. Hume's motion for an inquiry into the condition of the Protestant Church in Ireland. (May 6th, 1824.)

Mr. Hume introduced the subject in a temperate speech. He referred to the blessings of the Scotch people, who were allowed, as he said, to choose their own religion. He traced the most important miseries of Ireland to a system of religious ascendancy. He went into the statistics of the Irish Church in detail, and accused the clergy of being, in a vast number of instances, pluralists and absentees. He also charged the bishops with extreme negligence of their sacred duties.

Mr. Stanley (now Earl of Derby) followed in an eloquent and telling appeal to the House. He said :—

That the public mind had for some time been prepared for some such proposition as the present, by anonymous statements, reiterated insinuations, and unfounded exaggerations; but now, for the first time, a formal attack was made on the Establishment in the point where it was supposed to be most vulnerable; and under the specious pretext of giving relief to Ireland, it was proposed to clip the wings of the Church, and exhibit her in an humbled condition to her rival.

He insisted that the Roman Catholics aimed at nothing less than the spoliation of the Established Church, but added that if such were their views it was time to show that the Church was not yet deserted by the legislature, and that her natural protectors were neither too weak nor too indifferent to uphold her. He asserted that the four great evils under which Ireland laboured were—the want of a resident gentry, the want of capital, the want of employment, and the want of education; and argued that all these four wants would be materially increased by diminishing the incomes of the clergy. After several other members had spoken, Mr. Plunket rose and said :—

It was not my intention to have made any observations on the motion before the House, but having been so directly alluded to by the hon. mover, I am anxious to prevent the House from remaining under the delusion which the speech of the hon. gentleman is likely to create, if permitted to go uncontradicted. I think I should not discharge my duty to the House and to myself, without, in the first place, making a few observations on the general subject, in respect of which those opinions have been offered. And I shall do so for the sake of rescuing a cause to which I have always been conscientiously attached, but to which much allusion has been unnecessarily made in the discussion of this evening, from arguments of a nature calculated to do it the greatest harm in the mind of every honest and well-

judging person in the House. The hon. gentleman who has introduced this motion, has consumed the greater part of the time which he has felt it proper to devote to its support—not in the discussion of the merits of the Protestant Church of Ireland, or her clergy, but of those of the Roman Catholic priesthood. And really, when the hon. gentleman couples the expression of his approbation of that priesthood with the exposition of his plan for pulling down the revenue of the Protestant Church in that country, of transferring and delivering it into the hands of the Roman Catholic hierarchy (for such is the scope of his proposition), the House will give me leave to say, that I deprecate the hon. gentleman's advocacy of their cause, more than I should lament his hostility to it. For myself, I have ever been, and to the last hour of my life shall continue to be, unalterably, the advocate of my Roman Catholic brethren; but, in doing so, I shall ever respect established rights and recognized institutions; and while I vindicate the claims of the Catholics, I shall carefully abstain from offering any wrong to the Protestant clergy—from any encroachments on their property—or any aggression on their sacred functions. Such are not the ingredients of the great question which I have already had the honour of submitting to the House. Such are not the wishes, nor the opinions, either of the Roman Catholic clergy or laity. I ask it, therefore, of the candour of the House, not to allow the cause of the Catholics of Ireland to be affected by what has been said this night by the hon. gentleman.

If that hon. gentleman's arguments had rested merely upon the wording of his motion, I do not know that there is a great deal in that motion with which I should absolutely quarrel; but I must judge of it by the spirit

and the arguments with which it has been supported; and when I heard some gentlemen (very few, undoubtedly) supporting it by their cheers, I cannot, as an advocate of the Catholic claims, feel that I am quite safe in embarking with such company. I will not sail in the same vessel with the hon. gentleman and his friends to the high latitudes to which they propose to run; nor can I agree to sail under sealed orders, that may be broken at a time when I could no longer escape out of their bark, and get back to the *terra firma* of the Constitution which they had quitted. The hon. gentleman is for no Church Establishment. Am I doing the hon. member injustice? Have I misunderstood him? He spoke of America as a model in this respect. Take notice, Mr. Speaker, and let the House, I conjure it, well remember, that this is the model which the hon. gentleman proposes to us. He would have us throw away our venerable institutions, our old establishments, and our ancient forms, and adopt those of republican America in her stead. But these are principles which, though they have been advanced by the hon. gentleman, will find, I trust, no other advocate in this House. It does happen, however, that, in the latter part of his argument, the hon. gentleman has dismissed the American model he had proposed in its commencement; and after suggesting that there ought to be no Church Establishment at all, he has proceeded to state that he does not altogether, as it were, disapprove of a hierarchy, but would have it established according to the prevailing prejudices of a nation. He has instanced the conduct of King William in Scotland, as tending to show that, in these cases, the opinions of the majority of the country should be deferred to; and in this portion of his speech the proposition of the hon. gentleman rather appears to be, that the property of the Church

ought not to be taken away, but that the larger portion of it should be transferred to the Roman Catholics.

Much, however, as I regret the principles upon which the hon. gentleman seems to found his motion, the means suggested for carrying its design into execution are at least equally objectionable. The hon. member evidently thinks that Parliament is at liberty to deal with the property of the Church exactly in the same way as if it were a tax, or any other property of the State; and this opinion he grounds upon a supposition of public necessity. Now, that the property of the Church may not be interfered with, as well as the property of the State, in a case of public necessity, I will not assert. But be it observed, that upon the same principle, the private property of every man in the kingdom is equally liable. I know very well, that both the property of the Church and the property of individuals must yield to the exigencies of the State; to those, the property of the hon. gentleman himself, as well as of every other member who hears me, must give way; but I will maintain, that the property of the Church is as sacred as any other. And then the question comes as to the construction of the exigency which should call for these encroachments on it. What is the public exigency that requires it to be withdrawn from its present possessors? Or what is the public good to be acquired by so withdrawing it? I am unwilling to enter into this part of the subject, which has been already so amply and so ably discussed by an hon. gentleman opposite (Mr. Stanley). And I cannot allude to that hon. member, without congratulating him and the House on the proofs he has so recently evinced of sound intelligence and manly eloquence; I congratulate him on the resources which he has exhibited, and the capability he has mani-

fested in drawing upon those resources during the exigency of a long debate, for answers to objections that have been incidentally taken. I beg to offer my congratulations to the hon. gentleman and the country, and the cause which he has advocated, and the noble stock from which he has sprung, and which has now received a most gratifying accession to its family honours. But what is the plan of the hon. mover? Is it the opinion, that, in lieu of tithes, something in the shape of a tax ought to be levied on the land? He has not opened so much of his proposition; but such is the inference that the House is warranted in drawing from what the hon. member has stated. I believe that it is one of the calamities of the country that there is not consideration enough had to the comforts of the lower classes of the people, but, if the tithes were taken away from the clergy, they would fall into the hands of the landlords; and I must again repeat, that to take away the ancient rights of one class of persons to give them to another, cannot be termed anything else but spoliation. If they begin with destroying the property of the Church, let the landholder look to himself, and let the fund holder also take care of himself, as he lies even more conveniently than the Church revenues.

I will beg to advert to one of the numerous exaggerations of the hon. member for Aberdeen. He has stated that there are upwards of 300 or 400 clergymen who are absentees. I do not exactly know the number he mentioned, but a hundred or two will not be thought material when I come to state what the numbers really are.

Mr. Hume, across the table, said there were

531.

Mr Plunket,—

I fear I shall hardly get credit with the House when I say that if they strike off the 500 from that number, the remaining thirty-one will be a considerable exaggeration. I do not mean to accuse the hon. member of intentional misstatement; for, indeed, he went painfully and elaborately to work, but on inaccurate grounds. Where there is a union of two parishes, he calls the clergyman who has the union a pluralist, and an absentee if he does not reside on both the livings [a laugh.] What I am now about to state has been communicated to me by a person high in rank and talents, and more likely to obtain accurate information on all matters connected with the church than the hon. gentleman. That distinguished person has assured me, and he is incapable of making the assertion if it be not correct, that out of the whole number of the clergy there are not twenty who do not reside on their parishes in Ireland. If the hon. gentleman still persists in his oddity of 531, I can say, of my own knowledge, that, so far as I have witnessed the conduct of the clergy of the Established Church in Ireland, no men can be more assiduous in the performance of their moral and religious duties. It is true that among them, as among all great bodies, there are some few exceptions to be found, some who, instead of attending to the performance of their duties, absent themselves from their parishes, and come to exhibit themselves at watering-places in the country, as bucks and swaggerers. But, generally speaking, the conduct of the Established clergy of Ireland is unimpeachable, and their excellence appears in a stronger light from the contrast of such exceptions.

I consider the Protestant establishment necessary for

the security of all sects; and I think that there should not only be an Established Church, but that it should be richly endowed, and its dignitaries be enabled to take their stations with the nobles of the land. But speaking of it in a political point of view, I have no hesitation in stating that the existence of the Protestant establishment is the great bond of union between the two countries.

Sir Francis Burdett replied to Mr. Plunket, and when the House divided there appeared for Mr. Hume's motion, 79; against it, 153.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION—THE "CATHOLIC RENT"—DANGEROUS IMPORTANCE OF THE MOVEMENT—MR. PLUNKET'S VINDICATION—"THE WINGS"—MR. PLUNKET'S SPEECH ON SIR F. BURDETT'S BILL.

IN the end of the year 1824 began the last act of the drama of Catholic Emancipation. The scene throughout this act was not so often laid in the House of Commons at Westminster, as in the Assembly Room of the Catholic Association in Dublin, and throughout the country towns and villages of Ireland. O'Connell sustained the principal rôle, supported by Mr. Sheil and the Roman Catholic bishops and archbishops, a chorus of 2,500 priests, and an army of 30,000 tax-collectors. The action throughout was rapid and startling, and in the catastrophe constitutional principles and great political personages seemed to be treated with about the same grotesque profanity as religious subjects are dealt with in old miracle-plays.

There are few passages in the history of the United Kingdom more curiously interesting or fraught with more profound instructions for the student of the principles upon which this empire is governed, than the few years which elapsed after the formation of the Catholic Association, and before Catholic Emancipation was passed.

To understand the nature and organization of this strange national assembly, it is necessary to recall the state of feeling on the great question at which the various classes of the Irish people had then arrived.

The Catholic masses were only indirectly interested in the immediate objects of the Catholic Relief Bill, but they were, owing to the overcrowding of the population, the absenteeism of landlords, the want of capital, and the want of enterprise throughout the country, in a state of great misery and discontent, and they were easily led to identify the many sufferings of their lot in life with the exclusion from Parliament of the gentry and nobility of their creed. They all the more readily adopted this view of their case from being constantly brought in contact with the State religion in the person of the Protestant clergyman, who, under the then existing system of tithes in Ireland, appeared to them as the most odious of tax-gatherers.

The small farmers—forming a not very important body—rose scarcely above the class of labourers, and were identified with them in their instincts; the small shopkeepers and traders, who in Ireland have always been proverbially politicians, were constantly on the verge of bankruptcy, and in a chronic state of disaffection to all existing institutions, but especially to that religious ascendancy of which they were daily reminded by one section of their Protestant fellow-citizens with every circumstance of insult. Such persons had long given up all hope of a parliamentary redress of their grievances.

Throughout the more respectable middle classes—the business men, the professional men, the landed gentry and the nobility—their legislative exclusion from office, place, and power, was felt more directly; but their hopes of any improvement in their condition had so often been disappointed, that just before the Catholic Association was started their attitude was one of sullen despair. But throughout every rank and class of Irish Catholics there was then, as there always will be in our race, an intense excitability, ever ready to be called into violent action by whoever can touch aright our sympathies. In 1821 a monarch landed on our shores. As an individual his worth was small; but he knew well how to strike the

note of personal loyalty, and the voice of the nation answered in a cry of wild enthusiastic affection. We shall presently see how the masterspirit of O'Connell swept the grand chords of religion and nationality; and we shall hear in what solemn strange harmony the voices of a united people swelled the chorus.

We must not omit either to notice the position of the Catholic priesthood and their hierarchy. Qualified by their education to understand the political situation in which they and their flocks were placed, they were indignantly conscious of the political nonentity of their religion. Taught by the writers of their Church and the peculiar discipline of their institutions, caution, obedience, and a forecasting policy, they saw in clearly defined outlines the dangers of physical resistance and the hopelessness of revolt. Stirred by an untiring zeal, and sustained by a boundless ambition, through all their humiliations and seeming feebleness they clung to the desperate hope that unlimited power and absolute pre-eminence should yet be theirs. When the aspect of their cause was gloomy and depressed they prostrated themselves before the Government abjectly; but no sooner had their fortunes improved than they resumed a haughty and defiant attitude. Ever ready to accept the smallest favours, they sought

to obtain each concession in such a form that it might help to the winning of more advantages. But to the Catholic peasant his clergyman was almost his only friend in this life—he was his comforter in his hopes of another. With loving reproaches the priest held back his flock from mad rebellion, while he sympathized in their sense of suffering, and flattered their prejudices. It is needless to suggest with what absolute authority such a pastor must have swayed the will of his people; how powerful he could be as a political agitator the Clare election proved.

Such was the state of feeling amongst Irish Catholics when the project of the *Catholic Association* was started.

In the month of May, 1823, Mr. O'Connell met Mr. Sheil, it is said accidentally, at the house of a mutual friend in the county of Wicklow, and there resolved upon the plan which they afterwards carried out so successfully. Mr. Sheil had up to that time supported the aristocratic party in the councils of the Catholics, in opposition to Mr. O'Connell, who represented the democratic element, and some severe encounters had taken place between them; but on the occasion of their last-mentioned meeting they resolved to sink their differences, and sign together a manifesto to all classes of their co-religionists. They did so, and

copies of this address were forwarded to the principal Catholics all through Ireland. Many whom they thus addressed, at first returned contemptuous answers, believing that this organization would, like all previous combinations of the same kind, come to shame, and succeed in proving nothing save the internal weakness and dissensions of the Catholics themselves. The agitators received but little encouragement; scarcely twenty persons attended the first meetings they summoned, and the public seemed insensible to the proceedings of these small convocations. But O'Connell did not despair. The energy of his genius was everywhere perceived, working amongst all classes. Here he breathed gently on the still waters of aristocratic reserve till he stirred a ripple on their surface—there his voice was heard rolling over the heads of mobs, stirring them and warning them like an alarm bell—now hurling defiance at those whom he denounced as oppressors, again whispering comfort and hope into the ears of the oppressed. A great mistake had been made by all the former combinations of the Catholics. The people of Ireland had not been directly appealed to, their voice had not yet been raised, their unanimity had not been proved. O'Connell saw this error and determined to avoid it. He resolved that not only the ears and eyes of

the masses should be appealed to by spoken and written words, but that their hands should actually be touched, that the power of the Association should be felt intimately throughout the country. An opportunity of carrying out this project was afforded him by the peasantry of the county Tipperary. A brave and sturdy race, they had been exposed to great sufferings and, as they thought, much oppression; they had formed themselves into various illegal associations; the magistrates had met force with force; and the people, thinking that they could not obtain justice from the local courts, and being too poor and helpless to seek for it elsewhere, took the law into their own hands: arms were carried off, houses were broken into, landlords murdered, hayricks and cornstacks fired; neither property nor life were safe, and a kind of guerilla warfare raged over the country. O'Connell seized the opportunity: money was subscribed, and fearless counsel engaged to defend the tenantry, free of all expense to them, and to beard the magistrates. The poorest peasant in the heart of the Tipperary mountains believed that the leaders of the Association were his champions; that men of whose names he had never heard were resolved to see his rights vindicated; were bound to him by ties of a common oppression; that neither wealth nor learning nor eloquence

would be grudged. This was the personal real sympathy that the Irish heart cannot resist. This was the one touch of nature that made the whole Catholic population of Ireland kin. The Tipperary Whiteboy laid down his pike, and threw himself into the arms of the Association, and abandoning the wild justice of revenge, he was for the time led into the paths of peace and quietness as docile as a child. Outrage and crime vanished; the insurrection passed away. All through the country the example set in Tipperary was followed. With the rapidity of instinct the people recognized their interest. Everywhere the epigram of O'Connell resounded through the country—"*The man who violates the law strengthens the enemy*"—and whoever heard this teaching absolutely obeyed. What centuries of oppressive policy and penal laws, what the fifteen years of Saurin's iron rule, what the dignified integrity of Wellesley's Government had utterly failed to accomplish, was done in eighteen months by the genius of O'Connell.

The Roman Catholic nobility, headed by Lord Gormanstown, and the Roman Catholic hierarchy, led by Bishop Doyle, joined the ranks of the organization. "The three hands, the three classes, were formed in one, the penal statute was the force which clasped them. The

entire country formed but one association."* The association thus formed held meetings on every Saturday in Dublin, and claimed to be the only authorized representative of the people of Ireland, and within a year of its formation it was engaged with such questions as church rates, secret societies, correspondence with members of both Houses of Parliament, public thanks to Mr. Brougham, penal laws as to rights of sepulture, the purchase of a Catholic cemetery near Dublin, the commutation of tithes, the admission of Catholic freemen to corporations, the wider extension of the Association into the provinces; and then, by one bold stroke of O'Connell's genius, he welded the masses intimately into this vast organization, and at the same time supplied it with inexhaustible resources.

This was the "Catholic rent." O'Connell told the people that "the pence of the poor would be better than the pounds of the gentry." An organized system of collectors was established throughout every parish in the land, who received from each subscriber one penny a month; and before long supplies thus provided averaged above 500*l.* a week, representing nearly half a million of enrolled associates.

Such was the Irish National Assembly that

* WYSE'S *Catholic Association*, vol. i. p. 211.

existed in the beginning of the year 1825. This *imperium in imperio*, though it violated no existing law, was, of course, inconsistent with the ordinary principles of the Constitution. It was therefore resolved by the party to which Mr. Plunket belonged that, together with a measure of emancipation, there should immediately be submitted to Parliament a Bill for putting down the Association. Accordingly on the 11th of February, 1825, such a Bill was introduced into the House of Commons, and was supported by Mr. Plunket.

In the following passage, which I extract from the very meagre report of his speech which has come down to us, having already fully described the rise of the Association and its dangerous importance at the moment, he adds :—

But I do deny that any portion of the subjects of this realm have the right to give up their suffrages to others, and to select persons who are to speak their sentiments—to debate upon their grievances—to devise measures for the removal of them—to impose commands, duties, or taxes on any part of the community, such persons not being recognized by law. This is the privilege of the Commons of the United Kingdom alone; and those who trench upon that privilege act against the spirit of the British Constitution. I will not assert that there may not be cases where no danger would be likely to arise from such an assumption of authority; but the case now before the House must be

treated as it really stands; and I contend, that if there be a body of people in Ireland—I care not whether they amount to 6,000 or more—who stand forward as the representatives of six millions of their fellow-subjects, such an assembly is illegal. That is the point which the House has to consider. So far as that assembly is opposed to the authority of the House of Commons it is guilty of a daring infraction of their rights. It is not the amount of the rent that I complain of: it is the principle that I complain of. For some purposes such a contribution might go on fairly: but in this instance does not the Association virtually declare, "We are the persons who represent the Roman Catholics, and we have a right to wield the power of the State?" Is this a state of things to be endured? If you do not put it down, will it not, on the part of the Legislature, be an ignominious abandonment of that duty which you take upon yourselves to discharge for the benefit of the country? But it has been asked very innocently on the other side—why meddle with it? Why legislate against it?—it will die of itself—it will pass away. Could the members of the Government answer for such a dereliction of duty to the country and to their own consciences? When the power of the country is seized upon and wielded by those individuals, who can answer for the consequences? Even if they were the wisest and worthiest men that ever wielded the resources of any State, I would not allow them to have a Government of this description. I would allow this species of power to no man, unless he was subjected to that wholesome control, to that salutary check, which was formed for a purpose the most beneficial—that of preventing those abuses which may exist under any system of government. But, to whom are these individuals

accountable? Where is their responsibility? Who is to check them? Who is to stop their progress? By whom are they to be tried? By whom are they to be rebuked if found acting mischievously? If the executive in the State wields great powers, the Constitution points out the mode in which it is to be done. But this society unites in itself all the powers of the legislature and the executive, and rejects all the checks by which the latter is hemmed in and surrounded. Let the House look to the nice balance which is preserved in this (for so I must denominate it) our popular Constitution. If the House of Commons could assemble whenever it pleased—could continue to sit as long as it pleased—why, in a short time the entire authority of the State might be swallowed up in the representative body. In that case, however, there is an efficient check: but these gentleman are subject to no control. They meet when they please; and, in point of fact, they are in the habit of sitting from January to December, and of exercising their powers with as much strictness and severity as the most absolute monarch.

There is another power, of mighty import, which they usurp. Gentlemen in this House who do not know what is passing in Ireland, are not aware of the despotic instrument—more formidable than the sword—which is wielded by this Association. Individuals connected with it go into every house, intrude themselves into every family, entreating—sometimes in the attitude of commanding—the inmate to embrace, subscribe to, or patronize their cause. They mix in all the relations of private life, and afterwards detail what they have seen or heard with such a degree of freedom and publicity, such an absence of all decorum or restraint, that it really requires more courage than belongs to ordinary men to

express a fair and candid opinion. In this way, the numbers of that Association, which, in its outset, was regarded without jealousy, have increased, from time to time, by fresh supplies of most unwilling conscripts, and now amount to several thousands; and, I ask, should such a body exercising powers so strange and unconstitutional, and recruited by means so reprehensible, be suffered to continue to increase in numbers and in influence—in all the elements of power, and all the means of mischief?

There is but one other topic to which I feel it to be necessary to refer,—I mean the interference of the Catholic Association with the administration of public justice. I cannot conceive a more deadly instrument of tyranny, or a proceeding more irreconcileable with justice, than this. The Association claims to represent whom? To represent six millions of the people of Ireland; and then they claim the right of denouncing, as an enemy to the people of Ireland, and of bringing to the bar of justice, any individual whom they choose to accuse (no matter on what grounds) of having violated the rights of that people. Is not this a mockery? Can the party so accused come safely to trial, when the grand inquest of the people of Ireland are his accusers; and when those accusers have in their power the application of money levied on that people? Would not innocence itself stand trembling and abashed before so dread a tribunal? The consequence must inevitably be, that magistrates and persons in authority must yield to such a power, or else they must array themselves against it. Looking to the consequences, I know not which is the worse alternative. In either case the country must be a prey to wretchedness. The courts of justice will be converted into so many arenas, where the passions of

those who appear in them will be displayed with the utmost malignity. There, party will be opposed to party, and thus these courts become scenes of factious contention. And, when such is the state of things, the Marquis of Wellesley must be content to lie under the heavy reproach, the painful imputation, of not having allowed this institution to die of its own follies! The noble marquis, in accordance with the rest of the Government of Ireland, wishes to put that Association down; and, in my opinion, the determination is a wise one. Is it, I ask, to be desired, that an institution of this kind should be kept up, merely because it is supposed by some individuals that it is impossible to carry the measure of emancipation by any other mode?

Of what materials do gentlemen think the Protestants of Ireland are composed, if they imagine that they will stand tamely by while such a formidable array is forming and combining against them. Will they not seek the means of defending themselves? Will they not establish a counter-association? And to what will this give birth? To two associations, destructive of mutual confidence between man and man, and dangerous to the peace of the country. I do not believe that among the Catholics there is any present purpose of having recourse to force. Their designs, I make no doubt, are peaceable: but they are not their own masters; they must obey the behests of those under whom they have ranged themselves, be the intentions of their leaders pacific or otherwise. The day may not be far off when these very leaders will themselves yield to a power superior to their own, and be urged into measures which they now honestly abhor. Let the dregs of that populace, whom they now control, be once stung by the madness of the moment into thoughtless exasperation,

they will find their place and influence usurped by desperate and reckless men—they will yield to the pressure of millions blinded and driven headlong, and be forced over that precipice on whose "slippery edge" they would now fain stop.

In the following sentences are contained the reasons which Mr. Plunket gave for having changed his mind since 1813, as to the expediency of his joining an Administration, divided upon the question of Catholic Emancipation. Having explained that his distrust of Lord Castlereagh's sincerity on this point had at first influenced him, he added,—

> The measure founded upon the claims of the Catholics continued to make its way. Through the zeal and activity of Lord Castlereagh it obtained an extent of legislative support which, while it left me no doubt of its ultimate success, also removed every suspicion that I had entertained of the sincerity of that noble lord in its support. It was at that time argued, with reference to the objections supposed to exist on the part of the people of England, but not with reference to what were or what were not the opinions of any boards or committees which had been constituted to support it. As the discussion of the measure proceeded the number of its advocates increased, and before the death of Mr. Grattan it had gained very considerably on the public attention. After the lamented decease of my valued friend, I had the honour of introducing the measure. It was warmly supported by some of his Majesty's Ministers, and though opposed, conscientiously, no doubt, by others, it passed this House, and

was carried to the Lords; and there, after a warm discussion, it was rejected, only by a very inconsiderable majority. Now, sir, when I saw those things take place, had I not a right to believe that the question could be carried by a divided Administration? I had seen it pass this House, and I saw it accidentally negatived by a small majority in the other. Was not this one fair ground for the alteration of the opinion I had formed in 1813?

But I had other reasons for the change of that opinion. The gentlemen who sit on the opposite side of the House will do me the justice to believe that, whether as a body or individually, I entertained and do entertain the highest respect for them. I respect the manly manner in which they put forward their objections to what they conscientiously believe to be wrong on this side. I do not for a moment assert that because I may differ from them, they must be wrong and I right: it must be remembered, that without ceasing to sit on their side of the House, and joining them when I could, I had frequent occasions to dissent from their opinions. They no doubt adopted the course which they honestly believed to be best. I claim the same construction of my conduct in that which I pursued. In that which I looked upon as the best, I had daily occasions to differ from them. On the question of the continuance of the war—a question the most important in its nature—I differed from them. On the question which arose out of the disturbances in 1819, I felt obliged to take my stand; and on public grounds I differed wholly from the view which they took of the situation of the country. On the question of Parliamentary Reform I also differed from them. In short, upon almost all the great cardinal points that can stamp political character upon a states-

man or a party, I found that our opinions were wholly different. But it was not I alone who differed from them in their views on many important questions; I found the public also differed from them on many most material points; and that, not possessing the confidence of the public on so many questions, they did not contain within their body the materials out of which a Cabinet could be formed with any prospect of carrying the question of Catholic Emancipation. When I thus found, that on the one side there were a set of men who, though not altogether agreed on the subject, could carry that question—when I found on the other a party, who, though agreed upon that point, did not possess sufficient influence to carry it—and when I knew that on many very leading questions of great importance I was conscientiously opposed to that party, to which I have never stood pledged, where, I ask, was my inconsistency in taking office, in obedience to the gracious commands of my Sovereign? I have thus stated the reasons which induced me take office, and to change the opinion I had expressed in 1813. I am not ashamed of those reasons, or unwilling that my conduct should be judged by them, either in this House or before the public. And though I think those reasons a sufficient justification of the course I have pursued, yet, if there should still exist any one who, directly or by implication, should impute to me that I have accepted office merely for the sake of place or of profit, and without any regard to political consistency, I will appeal to the history of my life, and to the sacrifices I have made for that consistency, for a proof of the fallacy of the imputation. Let me but be judged by the facts connected with my whole public conduct, and such imputations will fall as unfounded calumnies.

It was stated, sir, in the first discussion of this session, by the honourable and learned member for Winchilsea (Mr. Brougham), that the existence of the Catholic Association is in some degree to be attributed to a feeling on the part of the Catholics that they were deserted by their old friends. If this was intended as an allusion to any supposed conduct of mine, or to any supposed irritation on the part of the Catholics at that conduct, I must say that that statement is not borne out by the fact. I have on four occasions, since I accepted office, received the public thanks of the Catholics, assembled in aggregate and other public meetings, for my services in their cause, and those thanks accompanied with expressions of confidence in my continuance of those services. I here hold in my hand these published resolutions to that effect, but I will not read them. I would rather that were done by any other than myself. At a time when the Catholic petition was sent to me to be presented, I refused to undertake it, unless it were left to myself to use my own discretion as to the time when I should present it, and whether I should bring the question forward in that session or not. Those terms were conceded, and the confidence of the Roman Catholics in my exertions on their behalf remained unabated. That confidence was not withdrawn, even when I declined presenting the petition as from the Association. So late as in November last when it was determined that the Catholic petition should be confided to the care of the honourable baronet (Sir F. Burdett), it was resolved by the association, on the motion of Mr. Wolfe,—than whom it is but justice to say there does not exist a man of more upright character or more resplendent talents—that the Catholics, though they had confided their petition to other hands, still

confidently relied upon the continuance of my support of their cause. I do not think they could have placed their cause in more efficient hands than those of the honourable baronet; and I beg to assure him, that when he brings the question forward he shall have my unaltered support. When he introduces the measure to the House he may feel assured that I will not get up and walk out, leaving him in the unpleasant situation in which I was placed on a former occasion. When I say this, I am far from intending to cast any imputation upon the motives of the honourable baronet on that occasion. He did that which he thought best. I do not blame him; for I do not believe that either in or out of Parliament there exists a more just, consistent and honourable character, whether viewed in the various relations of public or private life. I am aware that the honourable baronet needs not any praise of mine, but justice compels me to say thus much.

I beg pardon for having occupied so much of the attention of the House in speaking of matters personal to myself; but what I have stated was, I submit, called for by the fact of my being mentioned, day after day, as one cause of the existence of this Association, as if that could have proceeded from my alteration of an opinion which I expressed twelve or thirteen years ago.

Tierney's speech, in reply to Plunket on this occasion, is a most admirable specimen of polite invective. The debate lasted for two days longer, and was virtually closed by Brougham. His peroration was in his grandest style. Leave was given to bring in the Bill by 278 to 123.

On the day after the "Unlawful Societies"

Bill was read a third time in the House of Commons, Sir F. Burdett introduced a Catholic Relief Bill, which received the hearty support of Mr. Plunket. On this occasion the measure was accompanied by two other Acts, known as "The Wings;" one of these was aimed at the disfranchisement of the 40*s.* freeholders, the other was intended to provide a State payment for the Catholic clergy on the following scale:—For a bishop, 1,000*l.* a year; a dean, 300*l.*; a parish priest, 200*l.*; a curate, 60*l.* "The Wings" had obtained the sanction of O'Connell, and would not probably have met with any substantial opposition from the Roman Catholic party in Ireland, if they had been carried along with the main measure of relief. But none of them survived in the House of Lords; and when the Irish Roman Catholics found that their hopes of emancipation were again disappointed, their indignation knew no bounds; their prelates loudly asserting that no consideration would ever tempt them to accept a stipend that should in any respect make them dependent on the English Government. Perhaps, however, the well-known reasoning of Sydney Smith on this subject may still be thought satisfactory. Some Catholic gentleman, arguing on this point with the Doctor, said, "Surely, Mr. Smith, you don't believe that the Catholic clergy would

accept the stipend, and how will you get over their passive resistance?" The Doctor replied, "If you knew, sir, that a 10*l.* note was ready for you at the bank whenever you chose to ask for it, how long do you think it would be there?" "Well, Mr. Smith," replied his questioner, "you have such a way of putting things."

The debate on Sir F. Burdett's Bill took place on the 28th February, 1825. The Government were nearly divided on the question. Peel voting against the measure, Canning for it. Mr. Plunket spoke immediately after the English Solicitor-General.

Lord Brougham has often assured me that Mr. Plunket's speech on this occasion was the greatest of all his efforts at which he was present. It is deeply to be regretted that the report of it was not corrected by himself; but even as we have it, it contains a luminous and complete historic summary of the Established Church in its relations to the other religious bodies of the three Kingdoms, and also a distinct and positive statement of Mr. Plunket's own feelings with reference to the sacredness, and, as he believed, the perfect safety of the Church property in Ireland, from any designs on the part of the Roman Catholic body. The reader will also find in the following report the passage,—really one of the finest he ever uttered,—which gave rise to the

absurd report that Mr. Plunket had said, "History is no better than an old almanac."

Mr. Plunket said,—

After the repeated discussions, year after year, which this question has undergone—after the recent protracted debates upon Irish affairs—and, more particularly, after it has fallen so often to myself, individually, to claim the indulgence of the House upon this very subject, I should have been strongly disposed, on the present occasion, to have repeated my opinion by a silent vote. There are, however, peculiar circumstances which compel me, though reluctantly, not to allow this debate to terminate without giving the reasons which still govern that vote. In doing so, I feel that I should not be justified in trespassing on the kindness of the House by taking a wide range of observation on this occasion, or in doing more than selecting a few leading points, and confining myself strictly to their necessary reconsideration.

I think myself peculiarly called upon to deliver my sentiments, as the management of the question has been taken out of my hands and placed in those of the hon. baronet opposite. I trust that no man will suppose me capable of harbouring a motive so mean or unworthy as to suffer my sentiments to be warped in the slightest degree by that circumstance. Every person who heard the hon. baronet must bear testimony to the perspicuity, the ability, and the judgment with which he has introduced the motion, and recommended it to our consideration. I shall endeavour to imitate the conciliatory tone, of which he has set so eminent an example, and, in arguing this question, to keep clear of all topics of irritation. As to the particular time when we are called upon to discuss the Catholic claims, I do not mean to

express what would have been my opinion had I been consulted on that point. I should have found it what, no doubt, the hon. baronet has done—a point of much embarrassment—not as relating to my own opinions, but to those of others, entitled to some degree of deference. For myself, my opinion has been long since made up on the subject, feeling, as I do, that not only the repose of my country, but the security of the empire, depends on this question being carried. I think no time can be too early for its adoption; none can arrive when it shall not have my most zealous support.

With respect to what has fallen from my honourable and learned friend, the Solicitor-General, who so ardently opposes the motion, why does he recur to the particular time of discussing the question as one ground of objection? Why does he call upon those who differ from him to attend to that point of the consideration? I must know from him, before I agree to go into any discussion on that head, at what time he will be prepared to give his consent to such a motion as this? I fear that he has made up his mind to a perpetual opinion upon this question, which will render, so far as he is concerned, any argument as to the expediency of time, a useless waste of words. Were the time one of perfect tranquillity and calm—the storm hushed and the sea at rest, he would say, *quieta non movere*, "no one calls for this discussion." But when the face of things changes—when the winds whistle and the ocean roars, then his expression is the other way—then "the time is too unsettled for embarking in such troubled waters;" and thus, whether in calm or storm, no time can be found which, in his opinion, is not inopportune for settling this, the most pressing of all momentous questions.

I entirely agree in the observation of an hon. member

opposite, that there is a peculiar grace and fitness in the present time for the concession of these claims to the Catholics. Some of the friends of that body have been induced, by what they feel to be a most painful necessity, to enact a measure of restriction against certain parts of that body—a measure which every gentleman must feel is calculated to irritate and wound them. It is, therefore, just the time to show the Catholics, generally, that notwithstanding what I allude to, Parliament is ready to consider the justice of their claims, and adopt those measures which are essential to their welfare. It has been said, sir, that this measure is losing ground in favour with the English people. I have not the same means of judging, as other gentlemen have, what are the sentiments of the people of England upon the subject, but I have of late spoken with men of various habits of thinking respecting it, and not one have I found who is prepared to say that this question is never to be carried. I have others to contend against, and they are the most formidable opponents of the measure, because they meet it boldly upon its own merits, and disdain the paltry trick of appealing to the passions or prejudice of any classes of the people; who declare that if they thought the accomplishment of such a motion as this would effect the tranquillity of Ireland, they would at once yield. These candid and able opponents are among the best friends of the Established Church, and when I hear such a declaration from their lips, must I not believe that, in the measure which I advocate, there is nothing, there can be nothing calculated to endanger the stability of the Church of Ireland? I solemnly assure the House—though this measure is as dear to my heart as any public measure ever was dear to the heart of man—if I thought it would subvert the Protestant Church of Ireland, or aug-

ment in any degree the danger to which it may, from other causes, be exposed, instead of being its advocate, I should be found in the foremost ranks of its warmest opponents. I support the question, not only because of its perfect reconcileableness with the stability of the Protestant Church, but because I think it will be found a measure eminently calculated to support that institution.

Some allusion has been made to former bills, and among the rest, to one of my own upon this subject. To show how clearly, on all occasions, the security of the Established Church was provided for, I will beg leave to read a paragraph from the Bill introduced by me in 1821, which was copied from the preceding Bill of Mr. Grattan. It is as follows:—

"And whereas the Protestant Episcopal Church of England and Ireland, and the doctrine, discipline, and government thereof, and likewise the Protestant Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and the doctrine, discipline, and government thereof, are established, severally and respectively, permanently and inviolably, in those realms. And whereas it would promote the interests of the same and strengthen our free constitution, of which they are essential parts, if the civil disqualifications under which his Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects now labour were removed."

These are the recitals of the two bills. How, then, can it be said that no adequate provision had been made for the security of the Established Church? My hon. and learned friend has promised to argue this question upon its constitutional bearings, but I have listened in vain for the promised argument. I have heard, indeed, from him a good deal about the Catholic Association, and the declamations delivered in that assembly, a good deal about the avowed intentions of the Catholic

clergy, but nothing, or nearly nothing, of the constitutional principles which the measure before us goes to violate, and the constitutional grounds on which he means to resist it. Sir, I conceive the peculiar excellence of our constitution is, that it has no unbending principles, no positive regulations, but adapts itself to the varying phases of human society as they present themselves. I must beg the indulgence of the House for a few moments, while I illustrate this principle by adverting to the conduct of those legislators who have gone before us, with respect to the Roman Catholics—men whose wisdom was discernible—not in a blind and obstinate adherence to old and long-established rules, but in the way in which they fashioned laws to the circumstances of the country, as those circumstances arose. It appears that alarm is excited in the public mind, in consequence of the claim put forward by the Roman Catholics. That claim is to be admitted to an equal participation in all those rights and privileges of the constitution to which, in a free representative government, all are equally entitled. Not that those rights and privileges will admit of no exception or control,—not that they form part of that great common which has been left uninclosed. There is nothing in the social fabric concerning which I would venture to make that assertion. Even the enjoyment of natural rights must be qualified, in a state of society with conditions; still more the artificial rights which grow out of the mere existence of society; but these conditions ought only to be imposed in the degree most likely to protect and preserve the liberties of all. Whether the rights enjoyed by individuals be natural or chartered, they are liable to be withheld, but it must be on the grounds of general expediency, the justice and necessity of which are as

clear as the light of the sun. If in the case of individuals, where such necessity may be enforced without public danger, the expediency must be clearly shown, how much more in the case of great bodies of the people: to deprive whom of their immunities would be an outrage to human nature and to reason, unless it be shown that the absolute safety of the State requires it.

I beg to direct the attention of the House to the circumstances under which our ancestors thought it necessary to limit those privileges in a very peculiar manner, with respect to the Roman Catholics, at different periods of our history. At the Reformation it was found necessary to deal with those rights which were fully recognized and universally enjoyed before that period. The main object then was to protect the rights of the throne against the claims of a foreign power, and against the disaffection of those subjects who might reserve their allegiance for that power, to the detriment of the Throne, and of the state in general. This being the object, how did they proceed? They guarded, in the first place, against the evils existing. These were the claims of the Pope to interfere with the interest, not simply of the Roman Catholic religion, which till then had been the established one, but he claimed also the right of disposing of benefices, of naming the clergy, of deposing the monarch, and of absolving the people from their allegiance. The legislature accordingly provided —by the acts of Uniformity and Supremacy—first for the absolute and unconditional integrity and inviolability of the Church, next for the spiritual prerogative of the Crown, forbidding at the same time the exercise of any other than the established religion. What were the mischiefs dreaded, and what the provisions of the legislature? To prevent the Pope, or any other foreign

power, from interfering with the Church. But what has now become of this danger which then existed? The Pope claims no right to interfere in the temporal concerns of the State or its religion. He claims merely to regulate the spiritual concerns and the consciences of Roman Catholics.

Does he pretend to the power of absolving subjects from their allegiance? No. Does he assume the right of appointing to vacant bishoprics? No. Of deposing the sovereign? No. These dangers have disappeared, and with them the enactments that were framed against them. You have now no laws against the exercise of more than one religion. You did away with them when you repealed the laws against recusancy. The Act of Uniformity is at an end, and in judging what we ought to concede to our Roman Catholic brethren in the present day we have no right to look back to the terror and alarm which existed at the time of the Reformation, and which have passed away.

Thus far did Parliament go, down to the time of the Reformation. The wisdom of our ancestors watched the progress of time, and took their measures accordingly. In the reign of Charles the Second, they observed a new danger, a monarch careless about religion, or secretly affected to an unconstitutional one, who was to be followed by a Popish successor. Here their providence was as remarkable as before. They provided a remedy —not exactly commensurate with the evil—but the only one they could obtain. They required certain oaths or tests to be taken by those who had seats in Parliament, or who held important offices. That was found insufficient on the accession of James the Second, who openly professed and was endeavouring to introduce the Roman Catholic religion against the Constitution, and the rights

of his people. The legislature finding this resource fail, then prudently shifted their ground, and had recourse to a measure at once, new, bold, and salutary. They drove the monarch from the throne, for violating the Constitution, and they resolved that the sovereign power should be held inviolable and unalterable in Protestant hands. Do I deny that the Throne must be Protestant? Am I touching that sacred principle of the Revolution, or doing anything to weaken the Protestant supremacy? No such thing. Is there any mode or device to make that supremacy more secure, which the genius of any man can suggest? Let it be named, and I am ready to incorporate it with the proposed Bill, or to have it introduced as a separate, yet concomitant measure. If then the dangers of that period, to which I allude, have ceased to exist, I call upon you to be just, and to grant to your Roman Catholic brethren that equality of rights and privileges of which they have been so long, and so unjustly deprived.

But to return. What were the dangers which existed after the removal of James the Second? The claims of an exiled family driven from the Throne, and the plots and agitations of a disaffected party retained in its interests. I admit, freely, that the Roman Catholics of that period were suspected justly of being favourable to, and eager to co-operate, with that party—that they were anxious for the restoration of the Stuarts, with a view to the establishment of the Roman Catholic religion as the religion of the State. What was done by our ancestors for the protection of the Throne and the Established Church on that occasion? All the former measures against the Papists were continued. Statutes of new and unwonted severity were levelled against them. They were declared bad citizens, and

as such were to be trusted neither with honour nor power in the State. They were coerced in their persons, deprived of their property, and bereaved of their civil rights; they were sunk, disgraced, and degraded into that wretched state, from which they were relieved by the benignity of the last reign. This was a natural and rational course of reasoning, though I do not conceive it to have been a very wise or just one; but it showed that our ancestors adapted their remedies to the evils then existing, and pressing upon their apprehensions. In 1778 a new danger and an entirely new difficulty presented themselves. The Roman Catholics had proved themselves truly submissive—they had been uniform in their peaceable conduct. Though rebellion had twice raged in Scotland, no movement was made in Ireland in favour of the exiled family. It was found that the Catholics, so sunk and degraded, were not only incapable of becoming formidable enemies, but were inefficient friends and unprofitable subjects; it was found that by the depression and privations imposed upon them, the heart's-blood of the State was impoverished, and required to be strengthened.

The lands were insufficiently cultivated; the landlord could not obtain his rent; the merchant could not carry on his commerce; the peasant was reduced to misery. The valuable energies of labour were everywhere paralyzed. These were the evils of that period; and to them a remedy was applied, by a repeal of those penal laws that weighed heaviest upon the Catholics. If the annals of that period were to be properly read and considered, the late King would be for ever illustrious in history, entitled as he is to the especial gratitude of every Roman Catholic in Ireland. That system of beneficence which he introduced has been now in practice

for the space of forty years. It has raised the Roman Catholics of Ireland to a state of affluence, comfort, and respectability. It has given them a perfect equality of civil rights. It has caused them to participate in some of the advantages of our institutions. What is the danger which we have now to dread? Not the Pope—not the claims of foreign potentates—not the assumption of a power to dissolve the allegiance of the people—not the interests of the exiled family. The Roman Catholics have perfected the proofs of their obedience, and have been admitted to their civil rights, as good subjects who are entitled to everything which they can reasonably claim. The danger now to be apprehended is perfectly new, though not inferior, I admit, to that of a dispute concerning the supremacy or the succession of the Crown. Better measures have prevailed—the State has acquired sounder health—a current of wholesome blood has been poured into it—feelings of conciliation have been manifested—the Roman Catholic subjects, though not directly raised to power in the State, have acquired possession of the means of danger, and are on a par with ourselves. I will not stop to inquire whether they amount to four, five, or six millions; but there they are—millions—increasing in power, intelligence, and wealth—awakened to a full sense of their condition—coming up to your Bar, year after year, to claim the rights and privileges enjoyed by their fellow-subjects, and—retiring dejected and disappointed. That is the danger which the House has now to cope with. Yet there are men who persist in telling us that we are not to look at the dangers which actually beset us, but must cast our eyes back to the dangers that existed at the time of the Reformation, the reign of James the Second, and the Revolution. Sir, I will say that the present

danger is the greatest, perhaps the only one that we have to consider. The other argument proves a want of acquaintance with human nature—it bespeaks a misapplication of the truths of history, and an utter ignorance of their real value.

Time, as has been said by the wisest of men and the most sagacious observer of its effects, is the greatest innovator of all. While man would sleep or stop in his career, the course of time is rapidly changing the aspect of all human affairs. It is the province of human wisdom to wait upon the wings of time—not with the vain hope of arresting his progress, but to watch his course —to adapt institutions to new circumstances as they arise, and to make their form reflect the varying aspect of events. Unless we do this, of what value is it to go back to former periods? Unless we draw lessons of wisdom from the facts which we recall, experience will become a swindler, who thrusts upon us an old coinage at a value which it has long since lost. Our knowledge will dwindle into pedantry, our prudence into dotage, and history itself will be no better than an old almanac. When I admit that the present danger is serious, do I therefore inculcate dread? Far from it. Were the Catholics to come to your bar claiming their rights with shout and tumult, I would laugh at their idle clamour. Were they to utter threats and defiance, I would despise their impotent menace. Were they to come with force and arms, I would meet their insolence with force, and easily subdue them. But when they come before us imploring an equal participation in the blessings of the British Constitution, I confess I have no weapons left with which to oppose them. I have no mode of dealing with them but to take them to my bosom as allies and equals—to admit them to all the benefits,

and join with them in the defence of the Constitution,—be it against foreign or domestic enemies—be it in peace or be it in war.

But we are told that in the principles of the Constitution there is a perpetual bar to the admission of the Roman Catholic. Sir, I have read with eagerness, and carried on my researches with deep anxiety; I have laboured hard to find out where that principle exists; and I solemnly declare that I cannot discern it. Referring to the distinction which has been taken between civil and political rights, are the facts so, that the Constitution does not admit any to political power, however completely in the possession of their civil rights, unless they subscribe the doctrines of the Established Church? Does not every day's experience disprove that assumption? Is not the honourable member for Norwich (Mr. W. Smith), whom we listen to day after day with satisfaction, an example of the contrary? Where is the alarm from the disjunction of the interests of Church and State? Has there not been a Lord Chancellor of England who was a Dissenter? A man who refused to subscribe the doctrines of the Church had, in his official capacity, issued writs of summons to the peers of Great Britain, and appended the great seal to them. I allude to the late Lord Rosslyn. Are honourable members who contend for this ignorant of what has been doing in Ireland? The test laws have been there repealed for fifty years, and the dissenting influence has been on the decline ever since. When that repeal was talked of, there was great alarm. Dean Swift, with all his wit and talents, felt and spoke of it with horror and desperation, and prognosticated from it the immediate downfall of the State. For forty years past it has not been heard of, and is almost forgotten by the House.

The influence of the Dissenter has ever since declined. Has that of the Catholic declined in the same period? No; under the hand of severity it has been cherished and fostered into a formidable magnitude, while the influence of the Dissenter has been withering under the smile of liberty.

But, it is said, the Roman Catholics may have their civil rights; they must not, however, expect political power, *that* the Constitution prohibits. Is there then nothing of political power in what they possess? They have the right of electing members to serve in Parliament. Is that no exercise of political power? They act as magistrates. They serve as jurors. Is not that exercising political power? This country has liberally imparted education to them. Does not that put the means of political power within their reach? Where is the line of distinction between civil and political power marked in the constitution? The warmth of discussion apart, I denounce the doctrine, as inconsistent with the principles of our free constitution, and only fitted for the meridian of a despotic government. I once endeavoured to define civil liberty to the House; and used the description which is found in the books. "Civil liberty consists in doing all that which the law allows a man to do." But I go beyond that. There is a political liberty which secures to every man the exercise and enjoyment of civil liberty. Once admit men to enjoy property, personal rights, and their usual consequences, and on what pretence can they be excluded from the institutions by which the whole of those possessions must be guarded?

It is said that the Roman Catholics of Ireland enjoy civil rights—the rights of property and personal security, and it is asked, what have they then to complain of? They are only excluded from the Parliament, the Bench,

and the high offices of State; which means that they are only excluded from the making and administering of the laws, from all posts of honour and dignity. These are bagatelles, for which, according to the argument, it is not worth the Catholics' while to contend. If that be so—surely it is scarcely worth the while of the Parliament to refuse them. But is this exclusion nothing? Is it nothing to be excluded from honour and ambition, from the fruits of industry and talents? How would the honourable and learned gentleman, the Solicitor-General who used this argument, like to be excluded from his chance of obtaining these trifles? I beg to ask, if these are not the very nothings for which Englishmen would cheerfully lay down their lives? Do they still talk of the danger of admitting the Catholics? I put it to the House to consider whether they would willingly see such a body represented anywhere but within the walls of Parliament. To shut them out from Parliament, after giving them everything which renders them consequential short of sitting in Parliament, is to teach them to array themselves elsewhere. Somewhere else they must go if the House cannot make room for them. God forbid the recurrence of bad times! but it might happen that a bad prince should mount the throne, and then, perhaps, being refused admission where they have a right to it, they would range themselves behind the throne, and assist in the sacrifice of the public liberties. My honourable and learned friend the Solicitor-General is satisfied as to the laity, whom he considers as sufficiently good subjects. He forgets, in their regard, all his ancient terrors, suggested by the periods of the Reformation and the Revolution. The danger he now apprehends is from the Roman Catholic clergy. He dreads, in a country, where the majority of the people differ from the religion of the

State, the uncontrollable and all-controlling influence of the priests, who are themselves detached from the State. France, it has been said, has of late shown herself particularly tenacious on the subject of religion; and looking at what might be her views with regard to Ireland, it is said, that there may be great danger. But how does the present measure go to increase the influence of the clergy over the flocks, or to widen the difference between them and their Protestant brethren? It will not, I believe, be denied that the present Bill goes to diminish so much of the influence of the clergy as arises out of the grievances of the laity. Here is a danger admitted on both sides to be actually existing, and here is a measure proposed by the honourable baronet to meet that danger. Let the measure for bringing the laity within the pale of the Constitution be proved to be calculated to increase the influence of the priesthood, and then I will listen to these objections.

Before I go further I would ask those honourable members who admit the dangers which exist, whether they are prepared with a remedy? Some may, perhaps, tell me that we are to trust to time and to proselytism. I admit that much may be expected from proselytism if it be fairly effected by argument and sound reasoning; and I know that nothing is so likely to increase it as the pious and exemplary lives, the kind and charitable behaviour, and the religious example of the Protestant clergy, and I am of opinion that the time will come when the religious differences between Protestants and Catholics will be much lessened, and, though we may not see it, that our children's children may be witnesses of it. But, sir, this prospect is distant and uncertain; the dangers which surround us are pressing and imminent. So long as you continue a line of demarcation between the Protestants

and Catholics, so long do you hold up the latter as aliens to the State. And, while you do this, let it be considered that your proselytism will be at a standstill. For any man who should become a Protestant under such restrictions, would be considered an apostate, a wretch who changed his religion only for purposes of gain.

Before I conclude, I must take the liberty of stating shortly to the House a few of the measures which I consider calculated to remedy the existing evils. First, I would take away all grounds of grievance, by placing the Roman Catholic on an equal footing with the Protestant. I would do this in order to prevent their union in one body against one common oppression. Next, I would, as has been recommended by an honourable friend of mine, make a suitable provision for the Roman Catholic priesthood. I have been told that the Roman Catholic priest would not consent to such an arrangement. Let me assure my honourable friend that he is deceived in his statement. The Roman Catholic clergy would not, it is true, purchase a permanent provision by the disgrace of having abandoned their flocks. But if Catholic Emancipation were granted—if the laity were once relieved from the disabilities under which they labour—the Catholic priesthood would anxiously and gratefully receive a permanent provision. Honourable members are much mistaken, and know but little of Ireland, if they imagine that the Irish people, or the Irish priesthood, wish to usurp the property of the Established Church. The Church of Ireland may be in danger of being pulled down from other causes, but if it were pulled down to-morrow, and the livings offered to the Roman Catholic priests, the laity would not allow them to accept them. I speak this in the hearing of many who are acquainted with Ireland, and who must

know, that it is not the wish of the laity to have their priests raised to influence and authority by such means. The gentry of Ireland respect their priesthood, but I can assure the House they are not priest-ridden.

Before I sit down, sir, I must say one word more as to the danger which I conceive to exist at the present period. If the priesthood were to express a desire to get possession of the Church property, the laity would at once cry out against them; but I would ask, are the Protestant clergy right or wise in saying that they are determined to resist the claims of the Roman Catholics, so long as they themselves exist? What is this but converting what before was but a wild and wicked chimera into a rational motive, not for despoiling the Church, but for resisting and endeavouring to abate an unprovoked aggression? What is this but compelling the Catholics to say, we must now oppose the Protestant clergy in self-defence, for, until they shall be deprived of their property, we have no chance of obtaining our political rights? All who know me are aware that I am, and ever have been, a zealous supporter of the Established Church; but never, even when I have been most zealous in its support, do I conceive myself to have rendered it better service than in giving it this warning and placing its ministers on their guard. Sir, I feel convinced, that if a foreign enemy were landing on our coast to-morrow, this House would not grant to the Roman Catholics anything which it could not concede with honour and with safety to the Established Church. I trust to God that no such period may arrive; I feel that if it ever does, it must be far, very far distant. But I know that, were it to come, such would be your firm and irrevocable determination. And, sir, it is because I know there exists no such danger—it is because I feel

that we are in a time of perfect safety and security, that I call upon you to do that now, which a sense of justice ought to compel you to do even in a time of the greatest danger. Let me not be told, sir, that the people or the priesthood of Ireland will refuse to accept any concession which we may make to them. I say, in the language of my honourable friend the member for the county of York [Mr. Stuart Wortley], that it is for us to legislate; that it is for us to do what is right; and if the Catholics of Ireland should refuse to accept what we offer them, they will be deprived of all power to do injury, because they will be deprived of all power to make just complaint.

One word more and I have done. The alarm which exists with respect to the Roman Catholics of Ireland is, I can assure the House, unfounded. The Roman Catholics of Ireland are not only tranquil, but loyal. Nay, more, they are determined to continue loyal, no matter what may be the result of their application to Parliament, because they feel satisfied that the growing feeling of liberality towards them, and the enlightened policy of England, will not allow them to labour long under their present disqualifications. For myself, I feel perfectly convinced of the loyalty of the Roman Catholics; and, if the Government of France should be speculating upon their disloyalty, be assured of it, they will find themselves much mistaken; for, should the day ever come when that loyalty should be put to the test, they would be found to a man rallying round the standard of the British Constitution. And why is it that such conduct is to be expected from them? It is because they have under that Constitution enjoyed thirty-five years of conciliation and progressive improvement; it is because they trust to the kindness and the wisdom of the British legisla-

tion. But, sir, we want something more from the Irish people than loyalty: we want their affection; we want their confidence; we want their cordiality; we want to induce them to deal with us as friends and brothers, in order to put an end to those anxieties which disturb us, and free us from that feverish state in which we have so long been placed. I beg pardon, sir, for having trespassed at such length upon the attention of the House, and conclude by giving my most cordial support to the motion of the honourable baronet.

Sir Francis Burdett's Relief Bill was carried by a majority of twenty-one.

CHAPTER V.

PROGRESS OF THE RELIEF BILL — PLUNKET'S LETTER TO LORD WELLESLEY — THE DUKE OF YORK'S VOW — LETTER FROM O'CONNELL — FROM LORD WELLESLEY — THE NEW CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION — VIOLENCE OF THE AGITATORS — CANNING AND SPRING RICE ON CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION — LETTER FROM PLUNKET TO CANNING — INCREASED AGITATION — ALARMIST LETTER OF O'CONNELL — FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN PLUNKET AND CANNING — THE KING'S ANTIPATHY TO THE CATHOLICS — PLUNKET RAISED TO THE PEERAGE — HIS FAREWELL LETTER TO THE DUBLIN UNIVERSITY.

THE majority of twenty-one, which was obtained for Sir F. Burdett's Catholic Relief Bill on the twenty-eighth of February, 1825, was the largest that the friends of the Catholics in the House of Commons had ever secured in favour of their measure, and their spirits rose accordingly. In Ireland the leaders of the Association, whose meetings had been made illegal, ceased to assemble, and seemed to rest from their labours while they watched the progress of the measure of Emancipation as it rose into the dangerous atmosphere of the Upper House. Mr. Plunket wrote to Lord Wellesley a few days after the debate of the 28th, as follows :—

[*Private and Confidential.*]

MY LORD, *London, March 2nd*, 1825.

I avail myself of the first moment's cessation from Parliamentary labours, to lay before your Excellency some account of our proceedings, with my views and impressions as to the present posture of affairs here.

The Bill for putting down the associations, carried as it has been by so very large a majority, has not merely opened a reasonable prospect of tranquillity in Ireland, but has produced the best possible effects here. I did not trouble your Excellency with any of the alterations which were from day to day made in its clauses: they were merely to meet suggestions as they arose, and did not appear materially to affect the great and leading principles which had been originally sanctioned by your approbation. Lord Liverpool's statement in the House of Lords, that the measure originated from your Excellency, was, I think, very useful in its tendency to satisfy the minds, even of the most extreme Protestants, that their interests are safe in your hands. Even had the matter rested on the single measure, unaccompanied by the pending inquiries, I am satisfied that the results in Ireland would have been very far from realizing the gloomy predictions of many of the opposition members, and therefore, if I had been consulted on the expediency of Burdett's motion, I should have been rather disposed to advise against it, being aware that a strong weight of angry feeling had been brought down upon the cause by the conduct of the Association—the event, however, has proved that I was mistaken, or that their error has been more fortunate than my prudence.

I most sincerely congratulate your Excellency on the result. We have divided with numbers absolutely

greater than we ever had on any stage of the Catholic question, and with a majority greater than we ever had at the commencement of any discussion upon it. In this majority we were able to count the names of many who now for the first time voted with us, and of these several who had hitherto uniformly voted against us. Along with this there is a general admission that the measure must ultimately be carried, and the question is not merely a question of time, but within what very short period it must be disposed of. When to these circumstances I add the consideration that all this has taken place in despite of feelings roused (and justifiably) against the leaders of the Irish Catholics, and when I consider the effects which may be produced by the incorporating with the Bill measures respecting the Roman Catholic clergy and the increase of the qualification of the holders, I do not think I am over-sanguine in calculating on a very increasing majority in the future stages of the Bill.

What effects such a state of things may produce in other quarters your Excellency is infinitely more capable of forming a judgment than I can pretend to be; but it is quite evident, be the present issue what it may, that the prospects now opened to your Excellency of a peaceful and prosperous administration of your Government in Ireland are of the most gratifying and hopeful character.

In order to realize these prospects, it is most essential that your Excellency should have the means of holding continued and cordial intercourse with the principal persons, whether lay or ecclesiastical, of the Roman Catholic persuasion in Ireland. I mean this not merely with a view to the present measure, but to the effectual and tranquil administration of the general business of the country.

I am quite sure that no person connected with your Excellency's Government will now oppose any difficulty in the way of such a course, and that a firm quiet system as to things is of much more importance than any considerations which relate merely to persons. These are subjects, however, in which it is not for me to intermeddle, and upon which I merely venture to offer suggestions for your Excellency's consideration.

I have *heard* much of the present opinions and sentiments of the Roman Catholic leaders, and I have *seen* something of them. I believe they are at present sincerely disposed to support your Excellency's Government, and to express their confidence in it, and to afford all the facilities in their power to the carrying of the present measure. It appears to me to be obvious policy to encourage these feelings and not to let the late Bill assume a character of triumph over them.

I saw Mr. Canning yesterday. He is pretty well, but in full gout. He is in good spirits on Irish affairs, both as far as the country is concerned, and particularly with reference to your Excellency.

He means to have the honour of writing to you in the course of a few days. I mentioned to him the circumstances communicated to me by Mr. Blake, of the mode in which Lord Combermere's successor had been nominated, and he undertook to make immediate inquiry on the subject.

My attendance here in the interval between this and the introduction of the Bill, is so necessary that I shall not think of returning until after the Easter holidays, unless your Excellency shall intimate an opinion to the contrary. The Bill will, I believe, be introduced before the holidays, but the second reading will not be brought forward till afterwards. I shall take care to inform your

Excellency of its progress and particulars in the meantime.

I cannot conclude without congratulating your Excellency on the result of Blake's evidence upon the committees. It has been marked by clear sound sense and original strength of mind, great liberality and candour, and a very uncommon degree of acquaintance with the state of things in Ireland. I anticipate from it very beneficial effects.

I have the honour to be,

With greatest respect and regard,

Your Excellency's faithful servant,

W. C. PLUNKET.

The agreeable anticipations thus raised by the successful division of the 28th February, were of course dashed to pieces when the Relief Bill was rejected in the Lords on the 17th of May, by a majority of sixty-five. But even before this decisive vote, indications of the coming disaster were given throughout the month of April, as from time to time petitions on the subject were presented in the Upper House. It was on one of these occasions that the Duke of York, heir presumptive to the Throne, made his celebrated *ether* speech; an oration full of the most well-meant and sincere bigotry, which he concluded with the following solemn vow of eternal hostility to the Catholic claims:—

I have uttered my honest and conscientious sentiments, founded on principles which I have imbibed

from my earliest youth, to the justice of which I have subscribed, after careful consideration, in maturer years; and these are the principles to which I will adhere, and which I will maintain, and that up to the latest moment of my existence, *whatever may be my situation in life, so help me God.*

From the increased cordiality with which the Duke of York was markedly treated on all public occasions by the King, it was but too plain that his Majesty had silently adopted the resolution which his brother fatuously announced in public; and, under these circumstances, it was felt by all the friends of Emancipation that the success of that measure in the House of Lords could no longer be expected, and that their hopes had, like the mirage scenery of the desert, vanished again, just as they seemed about to be enjoyed in fulfilment. It is not difficult to realize the feelings of disappointment, almost of despair, with which Mr. Plunket must have beheld this new defeat. He at once foresaw the renewal of bigotry in England—the increase of agitation in Ireland—the opening of fresh fountains of sectarian gall—the sowing broadcast of fresh crops of insurrection, the immediate danger of a bloody rebellion, and the ultimate dangers of a more serious nature that might ensue, from the wearing away of the bonds that ought to hold Ireland securely in connexion with England.

He was obliged to return to his own country, defeated, there to stand in the midst of furious factions, striving to do justice to all; often driven to the unwelcome duty of suppressing with the strong arm of the law, excesses in word and deed, that sprang but too naturally from real grievances.

Before Mr. Plunket left England, he received the following letters from O'Connell and Lord Wellesley, each characteristic of the writer, and wonderfully different one from the other :—

[*Private and confidential.*]

MY DEAR SIR, *May 9th*, 1825.

I cannot resist communicating to you these *two facts*. You will, perhaps, smile at the importance I attach to your knowing them; but, at all events, no human being shall ever learn from me that I communicated them to you.

1st. I have good reason to be convinced that the entire *body* of the opposition would readily join Mr. Canning, the Grenvilles, and Lord Liverpool, to the exclusion of Lord Eldon, Peel, and their followers. If any thing could arise from your knowing this fact, I would probably be able to reduce it into a tangible shape. While I would, and do, consent to be disavowed, as wholly unauthorized by you and your friends, if it be at all desirable at any time to disavow me. I am ready to act with the full understanding that I am to be the sole sufferer, if any arrangement attempted on this fact should fail.

Throw this letter in the fire when you read it if you choose, and forget that it was written, if you think it

foolish or useless. I, myself, feel its awkwardness, and yet I write it after full deliberation, being ready to be sacrificed in the process of any experiment, which, if successful, would have such inestimable effects.

The second *fact* is one not existing, but capable of being realized. It is proposed that, in the event of the Catholic Relief Bill being thrown out in the Lords, every Catholic in England and in Ireland should call for gold at all the banks ; and thus, to the extent of their properties, add to the embarrassment now created by the increased rate of exchange. I need not tell you that I do not approve of this project, and yet I should not be surprised if it became hereafter *necessary* to carry it into effect. The Catholics are now combined. The Government has *now* the offer of the aid of that combination to assist every work of mutual conciliation, and it may *now* fling to pieces that combination itself; simply by taking away the causes which keep us together and force us to combine. May I add, what insanity not to seize this most propitious moment! But I have written quite enough to annoy you with its length.

I repeat, that while you are at perfect liberty to use —if any use can be made of these facts—you may, of course, be certain of never hearing again of them unless you desire it.

I hope my anxiety to quiet Ireland and to strengthen England will be to you an excuse for this venture.

Believe me always, with sincere respect,

Your very faithful and much obliged,

DANIEL O'CONNELL.

W. C. Plunket, Esq.

The heroic spirit which animated Lord Wellesley in his endeavours justly and honourably to

govern Ireland in all its distractions, is curiously shown in the following letter :—

[*Private and Confidential.*]

Lord Wellesley to Mr. Plunket.

MY DEAR SIR, *P. P., May* 22, 1825, *Sunday.*

Pray accept my grateful acknowledgments for your obliging and kind communications of the 18th and 19th. The situation of public affairs is truly afflicting; but the course to be pursued in this crisis is clearly pointed out in your suggestions, and is entirely conformable to my judgment. Firmness, calmness, perseverance, and (for the present) *steady inaction*, are the true principles of policy, justice, and honour, towards ourselves, our friends, and the country; and you may rely on my strict observance of these principles in *word* as well as in *deed.*

I am not in the least disturbed or agitated; this occasion is too great for passion; the sorrow is too deep for lamentation. If ever that spirit "which raised to height of noblest temper heroes old" can inspire this age, we should invoke its aid, for we require every effort, both of courage and temper. For my own part, I look to the lot assigned me in this public calamity with gratitude to God, and with an humble but steadfast confidence in my final reward, here and hereafter, for the just and faithful discharge of my high duty.

All sense of the peril of my station is lost in the contemplation of its glory, and I bless the goodness of Providence, which has enabled me to close a long and arduous career of public life, by a trial which must prove my title to the affection of my country and to the respect of the world. In this glorious prospect I am

still more ardently encouraged by the additional lustre of your approbation and assistance; with such a comrade I fear no disgrace, and feeling that our united counsels can neither be inflamed by passionate zeal, anger, and revenge, nor weakened by low self-interest and mean timidity, I cheerfully meet the clamour of the enemy without fear or desire of battle, but not without hope of peace.

I have received a very kind note from Mr. Canning, in entire accordance with your sentiments. I am truly happy to hear of our dear friend Blake's recovery. May he be preserved to give us his powerful aid and comfort in this trouble!

Ever, dear Sir, with true affection and respect,

Yours most faithfully,

WELLESLEY.

When Mr. Plunket returned to Ireland he found that O'Connell had, as he expressed it himself, "driven a coach and six through" Mr. Goulbourne's Bill for suppressing the Catholic Association, and that an organization precisely similar to that which it had been intended to put down was in full working order, under the title of "The New Catholic Association for Purposes of Public and Private Charity, and such Purposes as are not forbidden by Statute." The programme of the new association was thus sketched by Mr. Sheil:—

What, then, is to be done? Let there be a census taken of the Catholics of Ireland, and we will prove to

Lord Liverpool that we are not as three to one, but as seven to one. "Do not dress your slaves in a peculiar garb," said a Roman statesman, "lest they learn their strength." The next plan we shall adopt will be to have aggregate meetings in all our parish chapels throughout Ireland. In this we shall have the co-operation of our excellent clergy, who have been termed idolaters; but if they are idolaters, it is of the Goddess of Freedom, to whom an altar has been erected by God in the heart of every man. For this purpose a Catholic association shall be formed. I forbear for the present from entering into any further details of the plan upon which it is intended that this important measure shall be accomplished. The next project is one as simple as it is efficacious. Let petitions be presented from every parish in Ireland; and here again we must have recourse to the priesthood. I am glad of it. That pure, pious and unpurchased clergy, are willing to enter with us into this great confederacy for the freedom of Ireland. Of this noble spirit they have recently afforded an illustrious evidence: they collected the Catholic rent; they are ready to count the Catholic people; they are ready to gather their supplications, and to become the salutary medium through which the wrongs of their country shall be strenuously and currently presented to the legislature. This is the only course which remains for us to pursue; and whatever may befall us, we shall show that our fortunes and our deserts are not the same, and that if we are intended by the legislature to remain in thraldom, God and nature intended that we should be free! Never shall we relinquish the pursuit of that glorious object, to which the whole heart and soul of the country is devoted. And if we are doomed to disappointment,

let us exhibit rather the madness than the lethargy of despair; let us show the world that we are not debased, and let us swear never to abandon the great cause. We are willing to bind ourselves to its prosecution by the most solemn adjurations that can fasten us to God or to man; and if heaven be invoked by princes for our degradation, let us offer up a counter invocation—let us bind ourselves to our country by a bond as holy as a priest's word, and let us swear that we shall at least be free by the dignity of human nature, and so help us God!

The Wings were now, of course, indignantly rejected,* the moderate and conciliatory tone

* O'Connell's popularity was severely shaken when it was proved that in his examination before the parliamentary committee, he had expressed his willingness to concede those securities. This circumstance was seized on by Cobbett as an opportunity for an attack upon O'Connell, towards whom he seems to have felt a personal malignity. A newspaper war ensued between the English and the Irish demagogue, which has left some as fine specimens of political Billingsgate as can be imagined. Cobbett charged O'Connell with corruption, and subsequently retracted the charge. "Mr. O'Connell," said Cobbett, "was deceived in England; he was in fact the dupe of men far more clever and cunning, and of much greater experience, than himself. . . . . Let me say this: that though, as Mr. Sheil stated, a patent of precedency to practise in the courts was matter of pecuniary interest, I do not impute this species of vulgar corruption to O'Connell. I impute to him inordinate vanity—vanity greater than my pen can paint." In his reply, O'Connell commenced with a quotation from Rabelais. He then proceeded to say, that in a former letter he had called Cobbett "a comical miscreant." "I now withdraw the appellation. Cobbett is comical only when he means to be serious; when he intends to be jocose he is truly doleful; but serious or jocose, he is at all times a miscreant. In lieu of the name I thus retract, I will of my bounty bestow on him another denomination, which, although conferred by me as a matter of courtesy, he has most richly earned. I will call him in future a 'vile vagabond.' A vile vagabond he most certainly is, for one thousand-and-one reasons which I could mention; but I confine myself to these few: he is malignant, he is treacherous, he is false. It was my intention to have given him a regular reply to his charges against me. I believe I should have done

which had marked the language of the earlier association almost abandoned; and although the people were still cautioned against such acts of violence as might bring them into collision with the executive, a bad spirit of vindictive hatred towards the Government was encouraged. It is but fair to say that O'Connell availed himself of his personal influence, perhaps as far as he dared, to counteract such teachings, but the general spirit of the new agitation may be gathered from the language used at this period by Mr. Sheil. On one occasion (June, 1825), he said,—

"The Papists," say our antagonists, "are tranquil. They have been defied by Liverpool, challenged by Anglesey, and trodden on by York,—and yet they are tranquil." Insolent and malignant taunt! uttered in the wantonness of ignominious triumph, and intended to drive a whole people into madness—to cure it with scourges and blood. The Catholic people of Ireland are patient, but they are not, thank God, tranquil.

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it in the levity of my heart, but I now cannot condescend to address him. His claim on public notice arose from his talents, which were undoubtedly great. He has, however, outlived his intellect. It cannot be said of him that his 'wine of life is on the lees,' because wine is too generous a liquor to enter into the comparison, but his 'gin of existence is on the dregs,' and that fluid, which, while it flowed copiously and clearly, was pungent and intoxicating almost to madness, is now but a muddy residuum, productive of sickness and nausea, and incapable of giving one exhilarating sensation. . . . . I owe it to myself, and perhaps, to the sacred cause of which I have been long, and am still, the honest, and thank God, unrewarded advocate—I owe it to that cause to expose, in a simple and single point of view, the unblushing effrontery of Cobbett's falsehood."

It is well for themselves they are patient. It is still better for their insolent foes. Of what would their tranquillity be the symbol? Of despair. And what would despair engender? Murder, massacre, and rapine. We still put our trust in the wisdom of the legislature; we seek redress by the few constitutional means that are still left us.

The reader will easily infer how damaging to the cause of Emancipation such language must have been when read by Members of Parliament and the people generally throughout England.

The following letters, written in 1825 and the beginning of 1826, by Mr. Canning, Mr. Plunket, the Duke of Buckingham, Mr. Spring Rice, and Mr. O'Connell, illustrate the difficulties by which the progress of the Catholic question was during that period beset, and throw much light upon the vexed question of Canning's sincerity on the subject of Emancipation. A careful study of his conduct from first to last, has left no doubt on my own mind that he dealt with the claims of the Catholics ably and honestly in the face of a wavering House of Commons, a hostile House of Lords, and an impracticable King; that he in no instance sacrificed his principle on that great question, and that his early death was hastened by the constant disappointment of his hopes of setting it at rest.

[*Confidential.*]

George Canning to Mr. Plunket.

MY DEAR SIR, *F. O., Sunday, September 25th*, 1825.

Had the question whether to dissolve Parliament this year or not turned upon the convenience and advantage of the Government alone, it must have been answered in the affirmative.

The unexampled prosperity of this country, the unexampled tranquillity of Ireland, and the good-humour of both, constitute a state of affairs which, at the end of a sixth session of a Parliament, it was a great forbearance on the part of the King's Ministers to suffer to pass by. True, these favourable symptoms may continue, and even increase, but who shall undertake that a cloud no bigger than a man's hand may not swell into a tempest before the expiration of a twelvemonth?

I do not, indeed, see many such specks in the horizon, but there never was yet a political sky without some of them, and some there are at present as in all former times. I should feel, therefore, very doubtful, whether I had not concurred in a decision unfair to the Government, and therein to the country (which I may be allowed, in writing to you, to say that I consider as interested in the welfare and popularity of the Government), if I had not been satisfied that amidst all the calm apparently diffused over this part of the United Kingdom, there lay hidden—but ready to break out upon excitement—a furious zeal against the Catholic question.

I have received information within the last few weeks which leaves no doubt upon my mind that the fact is as here stated. In the north of England there are no strong indications of it; but in the midland counties and in the western and southern, the anti-Catholic cry was only

kept down (and not kept down in some places) until the proclamation for a new Parliament should give the signal for raising it. Once raised in half-a-dozen counties or populous towns, there is no saying how widely and how rapidly it would have spread.

It is but justice to those of my colleagues who differ from me upon the Catholic question, but first and principally to Lord Liverpool, to declare that he deprecated as earnestly as I could do the raising of such a cry. This consideration mainly, I might say with truth almost solely, decided our opinions on the question of dissolution in the negative.

But it is plain that little will have been gained in this respect by deferring the dissolution till next year, when it necessarily *must* take place, (beyond the divesting ourselves of the responsibility of *creating* the occasion of the cry,) if the interval is so to be employed by the Roman Catholics and their friends in a manner tending to keep alive the disposition to excitement. Nay, in some respects the danger will be increased by the postponement, as the dissolution then being foreseen inevitable, the anti-Catholic will be better prepared to burst forth in all quarters at once.

But, on the other hand, if that interval shall be an interval of tranquillity and abeyance as to the Roman Catholic question, I have little hesitation in declaring my opinion that the postponement of the election of the new Parliament, in whose hands the determination of that question (for our time at least) is to rest, will be of the greatest benefit to it.

It is therefore my clear and entire conviction that if the Roman Catholic leaders on your side of the water are true to the Roman Catholic cause, they will use their utmost efforts to prevent, instead of to provoke,

the agitation of the Roman Catholic question in the next session.

Consider what *could be* gained and what *would be* risked by bringing it forward in the House of Commons the last session of the Parliament. The sentiments of *this* House of Commons in favour of concession to the Roman Catholics are upon record. Thrice have they sent up to the other House of Parliament a Bill granting concessions, more or less ample (for I include my Roman Catholic Peers' Bill in the number): would a *fourth* enunciation of the same principle add anything to the authority of the preceding decisions? Would not a failure, or a fourth trial, do that authority away?

"But we'll not fail," some of your vehement orators may answer. I beg them not to be too sure of that. I speak not conjecturally, but with perfect certainty, when I aver that I *know* of *as many* warm and sincere friends of the Roman Catholic cause, who would withhold their support from a motion brought forward the next session, and who, if such a motion were pressed vexatiously and pertinaciously, would turn against it, *as* would fearfully reduce the slender majority of the last session. The persons to whom I refer are of such weight and character, so unquestionable as to their sincerity, and so unassailable as to their motives, that their example would afford cloak and colours to numerous other desertions, originating perhaps as much in lukewarmness as in timidity. For you must not deceive yourself (I dare say, indeed, *you* do *not* deceive yourself,) so far as to suppose that every man who votes with us on this question is therefore an enthusiast in its favour, and ready to suffer for it the martyrdom of loss of seat or of an expensive contest.

So much for the House of Commons. But as to the

House of Lords, the case is not less clear. No man can suppose that the House of Lords *could* yield to the mere repetition of a vote, three times rejected by them, of *the same* House of Commons. To force the House of Lords to a fourth rejection could be only to widen the breach between the two Houses, and to give to the dissolution of Parliament next year that very appearance of an appeal to the people which the postponement of it this year is intended to avoid.

If in the first session of a *new* House of Commons the vote of the last House of Commons shall be affirmed, —I do not say that the House of Lords will yield,—but I say they *may*. It will be in that case a *new question;* and such an expression of opinion by a House of Commons fresh from the people would *enable* the House of Lords to reconsider their former votes without dishonour. But to afford the chance of such an impression on the House of Lords, by affording the best chance of the election of such a House of Commons, a quiet session (in respect to this great question) is absolutely, indispensably necessary.

It is most to be wished that the Catholics themselves may acknowledge and act upon this necessity. But, if they should fail to do so, it will then be the duty (in my mind) as much as the policy (for the sake of the question itself) of those who take part in favour of the Roman Catholic Question, to resist any attempt to agitate it next year in the House of Commons.

So strongly, too, I feel this persuasion, that I am determined, if unhappily the question should be forced on, to meet it myself with the previous question.

I am aware to what misconstructions this proceeding may possibly expose me. I need hardly say that I had much rather that this extreme measure were averted by

the discretion of those of the Catholic body with whom the bringing the question forward may rest. But as one cannot leave such a matter to chance, and as one must be prepared for *possible* extremities, this is the resolution which (contingently, and not without hope that I may be spared the pain of acting upon it) I have formed: and I have thought it matter of obligation, as well as of friendship, to lose no time in making you acquainted with it.

Ever, my dear Sir,

Sincerely and faithfully yours.

GEORGE CANNING.

P.S.—I write in great haste, amongst many pressing calls of public business, but I would not defer writing in expectation of a moment of leisure which may not come, and what I write, however hastily written, is the result of long and most anxious deliberation.—G. C.

[*Private and confidential.*]

MY DEAR SIR. *Seaford, October 25th*, 1825.

I have always intended to acknowledge your answer to my letter of the 25th ultimo (though you were considerate enough to request me not to do so), and the receipt of your note of the 19th reminds me of that intention. Nothing could be more satisfactory to me than your concurrence (to which I have also, as you certainly know, the happiness of adding Lord Wellesley's,) in the view which I take of the present posture of the Catholic question, and of the policy to be pursued respecting it.

I suppose petitions cannot be kept back. But of what immense importance it would be, if they could be made to speak the language of thankfulness and reliance to the House of Commons, and of temperate hope to

the House of Lords, instead of bravado and bluster, which in England will never make way.

Mr. Wynn having written to me, in consequence of a letter which he received from you, I have communicated to him what I wrote to you. I find in return, to my great dismay, that there is a scheme, which he appears not disinclined to favour, of bringing forward a Catholic debate in the House of Lords! In the name of common sense, for what purpose? To pledge over again some who might like to have an abeyance of two years in which to forget their pledge of last session, and an experience of two years to plead for a change of both in next session? To give Lord King another opportunity of rousing the whole Church of England—the body in the State the most powerful, and the most active,—the only power perhaps that can be marshalled and combined,—the power which (I agree with Mr. Fox in thinking) made the "Revolution":—to rouse that body again, quiescent till Lord King excited it to action, and perhaps tending to quiescence again if they are let alone?—to afford another opportunity to the Duke of York?—to create a new necessity for Lord Liverpool? and to keep the question as effectually alive in the minds of the people, against the hour of dissolution, as if it were regularly brought on in the House of Commons, but without the corrections that attend a discussion in the House of Commons from the superiority in debate, and from the strength of numbers? For which of these objects is it intended to move the question in the House of Lords? That the moving of it will have all these effects I cannot doubt, and I earnestly hope that so gratuitous a mischief will be avoided. There is one part of your letter of the 1st, to which I particularly wish to reply. "If driven to the necessity of moving

the previous question (you ask) should I think it necessary or prudent to accompany it with any pledge or declaration as to bringing forward a measure in the first session of the new Parliament?" And having put this question you proceed to weigh the arguments for and against such a declaration, and upon the whole to decide against it.

I will say with you, that, as at present advised, I should think such a declaration better avoided.

But I can conceive circumstances in which I should feel a strong personal temptation to hazard it. And in any case, speaking to you, and for your own individual satisfaction only, I have little difficulty in answering, that *if* I should be "driven to the necessity" of putting forcibly aside the Catholic question till the next session, I shall be disposed to set myself right by bringing forward "a measure" in the first session of the new Parliament.

But doing and declaring,—much more pledging one's self to do,—are in themselves very different things; and might be still more different in their consequences.

Ever, my dear Sir,

Most sincerely and faithfully yours,

GEORGE CANNING.

[*Private.*]

MY DEAR SIR, *Seaford, Nov. 16th*, 1825.

I return the letter of Mr. Rice, which you were so good as to enclose for my perusal. In so far as the writer is concerned it is very satisfactory; but as to those of whom he writes, very far otherwise.

I see by to-day's paper that the Roman Catholics are calling for *foreign* aid. If they wish to see an unex-

tinguishable flame of opposition from one end of this country to the other, that is the way.

Ever, my dear Sir,

Very sincerely yours,

GEORGE CANNING.

[*Private.*]

Letter of Mr. Rice to Mr. Plunket.

MY DEAR SIR, *Limerick, October 17th.*

You may wish to learn the tone of feeling of the Cork, Waterford, Kerry, Clare and Limerick Catholics at our late meeting. They are all most anxious to *press onward* and to force discussions. So much difference of opinion prevails respecting the *Wings*, as they are called, that the modérés are endeavouring to preserve their influence by showing zeal on a question in which they may agree. I did everything but go on my knees to O'C. to deprecate any incautious act, but he is frightened to death, and has not the real spirit which enables a man to act according to what he feels right without looking to selfish consequences. However, he has pledged himself to try and bring matters to bear in Dublin. And if he finds he can do so without danger to his own *craft*, he will perform his promise. I have also written to Killeen, Gormanstown, &c. &c., but they will feel the same alarm with himself. Such is the shyness on the subject of the *Wings*, that if they but touch a feather, as Prior says, their passions are wont to be excited. I fear that the only way to bring them fairly to reason will be by the *united* voice of their parliamentary friends. On this you may reckon. I am sure, at least I anticipate, no difference of opinion among those with whom you are least in connexion.

The Lords I only look to as a mode of buying off

the other House. Everything that I can do shall be done for the one great common object.

Ever, my dear Sir, yours most truly,

T. SPRING RICE.

[*Private and confidential.*]

George Canning to Mr. Plunket.

MY DEAR SIR, *December 13th*, 1825.

The late most unfortunate and ill-advised conduct of the Roman Catholic leaders in Ireland, and the mischievous co-operation with their intemperance, of the fury and violence of the Roman Catholic ultras, lay as well as ecclesiastical, abroad, are fast producing their natural fruits, in a most decided alienation of the English public mind from any favourable or even patient consideration of the Catholic question.

I was considered last year as a gloomy estimator of the general feeling of England upon that question: I believe I was *then* nearer right than (I am sure) I wished to be. But I really do not think that the most sanguine friend of the question can *now* entertain a doubt that the sentiment which I then imagined to exist, though dormant, is at last roused into an activity, which would make the agitation of the question in Parliament this next session useless for any other purpose than that of excluding its supporters from the next House of Commons.

If I was wrong last year what have not *they* to answer for, who, according to that hypothesis, have not only roused the spirit, but created it! Such a state of things, it is hardly necessary to say, confirms in my mind every opinion which I expressed to you in my letter 25th September, except that, for the disappointment of which I am not responsible—that the interval

of a quiet year might be gained by the postponement of the dissolution. It might *have been* gained if the Catholic leaders in Ireland would have been still. It might have been improved in an incalculable degree, if, instead of lauding and hailing with enthusiasm the audacious revilings of Protestants and of Englishmen in the newspapers of France, and the greetings of absolute treason from America, they had abjured foreign aid and disclaimed revolutionary politics, and shown a readiness to trust their cause to the growing moderation and good-will of this country. The fair inference from all that they *have* said is, that they are ready to make common cause with her enemies.

Such a state of things confirms alike the general contents of my letter of the 25th *October*, but with one very important exception also, which I am particularly desirous of mentioning to you. I mean that part of the letter in which I replied to the question which you had propounded to me as to the possible expediency of any intimation on my part of a disposition to move in the question in the first session of a new Parliament.

Even under the then favourable appearances, the strong inclination of my mind, as of yours, was *against* any such innovation.

But *now*, or rather not now *only*, but *after* what has happened, even though appearances should again become more favourable, I have not the shadow of a doubt upon my mind that any such intimation would light a flame in this country, which would consume every Catholic candidate for every popular place at the ensuing general election!

Such would be the effect of the *intimation*—if the purpose continued altogether unchanged. And who is there that seeing the "beginnings of strife" now showing

themselves, would determine even in his own mind, or much more would commit himself to any other human being, that he would at a particular period force the subject into discussion?

Who is there that does not feel that times and seasons must be watched with a painful and cautious anxiety? and that that man would be mad who, meaning and earnestly wishing to serve the question, should pledge himself even *to* himself to begin his course of service on a specified day?

I retain the opinion that a similar success in the new House of Commons to those which we have thrice obtained in the present one, would afford a fair occasion to the Lords to reconsider their vote, and not an unreasonable hope that they might do so. But it is equally clear that an adverse vote in the House of Commons in the first session of the new Parliament, would throw the question back for years.

What, therefore, I answered doubtfully in my letter of October, I should now answer quite positively, so far as my opinion goes.

I own I cannot conceive any probable state of circumstances in the next session, which would make it advisable for any man holding the principles I hold (and which you have recently expressed) as to the best mode of serving the Catholic cause, or would make it even possible for him confidently to say, what course he might think it right to take on that question in a future session of Parliament.

Can it be true that they mean to fight, in the first instance, for the repeal of the Act of last year?

Ever, my dear Sir,

Sincerely and faithfully yours,

GEORGE CANNING.

[*Private and confidential.*]

Letter from Mr. Plunket to Mr. Canning.

MY DEAR SIR, *Dublin, December, 18th,* 1825.

Your letter of the 13th arrived late last night; whatever might have been the state or the susceptibility of the public mind in England when the different estimates were formed of it by yourself and others, it is quite clear that no variety of opinion can exist with regard to it at present. Lord King and some of his friends in Parliament had done pretty well, and had been fairly seconded by a suitable following of violent and bombast speeches out of it, before the close of the session. But what has passed in this country within the last few months must, I fear, not only have produced and almost justified the exasperated hostility of those who had been already excited, but must also have reached classes and turned against us many who before were well-disposed or doubting. Well prepared as I was from woeful experience, I certainly had not anticipated such a career of frenzy. You may naturally suppose that the opinion which I some time ago expressed to you of the inexpediency of announcing in the approaching session any intended proceeding in a new Parliament, is confirmed, so as not to admit of a doubt as to any measure in this Parliament. I believe that those people themselves, notwithstanding their rodomontade, do not expect it, and I have never heard a hint of what you mention as to an attempt for a repeal of the Act of last year.

With respect to what is to be done in a new Parliament, or how soon, I agree with you that there is much difficulty in forming a present opinion. Abstracting myself from all angry feelings growing out of the gross

provocation of these mob leaders, and falling back on my habitual views of the subject, I am more than ever sensible of the necessity and *urgency* of the measure, but its urgency must wait on its practicability, and that must depend on circumstances which no man can anticipate. Should it be brought forward in the first session of the new Parliament, I do not look to any possible state of things in which I would not support it strenuously, but I can readily suppose circumstances under which I should strongly advise against its being brought forward. At the same time that, under such circumstances, I acquiesce under or recommend postponement, I cannot shut my eyes to the danger of the question assuming this position, namely, that a measure principally and substantially affecting Ireland, passionately desired by all the Roman Catholics of Ireland, and sought for or acquiesced in by the majority of the Protestants of that country, still must be indefinitely postponed in deference to the feelings of the people of England.

This is a formidable state to have the two countries placed in, and cannot be a permanent one. It is not merely inconsistent with the pledges given, or I should rather say expectations held out, at the Union, but with the very principle of the Union. It will breed, not rebellion or insurrection, but settled hostility; it will bring down on us war before its time, and disable us when it comes, and lower us in the scale of empire, and will end in the question being carried in some scene of public danger or calamity, when who shall say what may not be carried with it?

I see no rational solution of these difficulties, but by carrying the question, and by carrying it soon. Measures of coercion afford no cure for all this, even if they could be made permanent. The Roman Catholics won't go to

war with us, and if they did and were subdued, as they must be, at the end of scenes of ruin, and after the sacrifice of public peace and credit, we should be, as to the real difficulties, exactly where we were, or worse.

You have before this seen the opinion of the Irish law officers, on the illegality of the projected meeting of the old association on the 10th of January. Should they persevere in their resolution of holding it, it seems scarcely possible to allow so direct a defiance of Government and legislature to pass unremarked. I have reason to believe that they mean to abandon the project, but we should not the less be prepared to admonish them when the time approaches, perhaps by proclamation, and then, if necessary, to disperse them. All their meetings since the beginning of August last, have been clearly illegal; whether in the event of their relinquishing the plan of the revival of the old association, it will be necessary or wise to put down their ordinary meetings, is a point on which there may be some doubt. The inclination of my opinion is against it; the meetings are very thinly attended, they excite little sensation in the people, who are paupers, and are generally disapproved of by the upper classes, (whose confidence in the Irish Government, I believe, continues undiminished), and are daily becoming ridiculous—persecution may change all this, and after all not effect any substantial object, for they may still have their aggregate meetings as frequent and virulent as ever.

You see how dangerous it is to give me any encouragement. I assure you I have much more tediousness which I could inflict on you, but I have mercy.

I am always, my dear Sir,

With truth and sincerity,

W. C. PLUNKET.

I have already referred to the audacious expedient adopted by Mr. O'Connell when Parliament had, as was imagined, extinguished the Catholic Association. The organization had been by law proscribed only by the name of "The Catholic Association," but O'Connell immediately called it together again "for purposes of public and private charity, and such purposes as are not prohibited by the statute." The reader will be able to trace the various phases of the struggle for emancipation after that event through the letters and speeches which follow. It is only necessary for me to say generally that in proportion as the Roman Catholic leaders in Ireland felt the extent of the powers they wielded, and the strength and resources of the popular feelings they had called into play, they became less measured in their language, and more violent in their conduct. A new and dangerous symptom next commenced to develope itself in the national crisis. The lower ranks of the Roman Catholic clergy,—those in more immediate contact with the people, began rather to encourage their flocks to insubordination, and even threatened to call for foreign assistance, though the hierarchy still professed to seek their great object by constitutional means. The effect of this state of things, while at the moment affording a handle to the opponents of the measure, was to produce upon

English statesmen an impression that the object of the agitation could not be much longer withheld. All classes, even the Protestant clergy themselves, were wearying of the strife. Under all these circumstances, it was the wish of the friends of the measure in the cabinet that it should be allowed to lie fallow for another year.

[*Private.*]

Duke of Buckingham to Mr. Plunket.

My DEAR SIR, *Abington, January 15th,* 1826.

Most truly I regard any circumstances affecting you, your comfort and domestic happiness. I am truly obliged to you for your letter, from which I receive the only intelligence now respecting the view the friends of the Catholics who are connected with Government take of their affairs. The continual aberration of judgment on the part of their popularly avowed advocates in Ireland is most distressing. I think the not bringing forward the question next session will be advantageous merely because it may tend to show these gentlemen that their friends in Parliament are not at their beck merely to bring forward their measure every session at their bidding, like the Bill for preventing fraudulent bankruptcies, at the commencement of the meeting of Parliament. But if you ask me whether I think the elections will be affected either way by it now, I declare I think not. The question is afloat, the armies in the field, and wait only for the signal of a dissolution to begin. But I have serious doubts whether the public mind is *much* agitated here respecting the contest. As far as I can judge, the clergy here are tiring of the

subject, and wish to see it set at rest. At least I see many of that class in the counties I live in, chiefly, who were very eager holders forth upon the subject of the dangers of the Church and . . . who are now quiet and wish to leave the final decision to the legislature. There is much to be done yet on your side of the water, and until the magistracy is really *bonâ fide* purified, the municipal authority over each county put under the care and responsibility (as is the case here) of one person, and that person the only individual through whom Government will receive recommendations of fit persons to be magistrates, and the local administration of justice simplified, as well as purified, there will be no real comfort wherewith to tempt the residence of gentry in Ireland, and consequently no real confidence existing between the people and the Government. I know that in the beginning this would ensure the magistrates being all named in each county by Lord A., Lord B., and Lord C. But this would cure itself, as it has in this country, and at all events simplify jobbing, which is the first step towards abolishing it. Excuse me, my dear sir, for taking up your time on the subject of the welfare of Ireland, which, as it occupies all your thoughts, is the subject which requires the least being intruded on you by others, especially by others so inadequate to the task as myself. But I can not forget that I am half an Irishman. Events probably will send me a silent observer into private life, and ingratitude and neglect disgust me with all public concerns—but one, and in that one you shall always find me at your call, ready and anxious to give you my best assistance. Believe me, my dear Sir, your very faithful and obliged,

BUCKINGHAM AND CHANDOS.

The Right Hon. Mr. Plunket.

Here is another curious letter from Daniel O'Connell, which shows that current beginning to set which ultimately carried the Clare election, although the great agitator in this letter pretends to assume a very different attitude from that in which he afterwards showed himself :—

[*Confidential.*]

Mr. O'Connell to Mr. Plunket.

MY DEAR SIR, *Merrion Square, March 7th*, 1826.

I regret that I feel it a duty to inform *you* that the accounts from the country by those who are well acquainted with the people are terrific. The Ribbon connexion has assumed a new form. There is now no oath nor any very distinct assertion of object. It is spreading fast through Leinster—in the southern counties almost as much as the northern. It has got extensively into Connaught, and it is beginning to accumulate in Munster. The present system has its origin in the north; the counties of Cavan and Fermanagh are the places of its commencement in this shape. The Orangemen—or lower orders of the Protestants in Cavan—have armed themselves with daggers of about fourteen inches in length in the blade, or what is nearly as bad, the lower orders of Catholics have been made to believe that they are so armed, and in consequence of such report the Ribbonmen are getting similar arms. There is this peculiar to the present system, that it is sought not to involve the married men or fathers in the society—but *all* the unmarried peasants are expected to be in it, and some are received as young as nineteen. One priest

assured me that no less than seven youths in his parish, of regular habits, left his confessional rather than renounce the system, or abstain from supporting it—the oldest of the seven was not eighteen years of age.

While I deem it my duty to communicate these facts, I have no remedy to suggest save the increase of the King's troops in Ireland. The exhibition of such a force may alone do good. The yeomanry are worse than useless; they irritate and provoke, and are very little to be depended on for any active exertions. Even the police have, in spite of, apparently, a good deal of attention to keep them free from party spirit, a good deal of inclination to display Orange feelings, and to insult, when they should merely assist to subdue illegal violence. The King's troops are, in my judgment, the best calculated in every respect to meet emergencies of this description.

The Ribbonmen in the present system are believed to be cautioned against useless outrages or exhibitions of their strength. They are to deal in buying and selling, &c. only with Catholics, or Protestants of known liberality. You are probably aware that there is a good deal of mere reaction in this part of the system.

I have done my duty in communicating these facts to you. The diminution of the currency in both countries will certainly create still greater distress among our landholders, and of course increase the tendency to Whiteboyism of every species. I am, I perceive, quite an alarmist, but it is only because those who give me this information cannot be deceived, and are themselves greatly horrified.

I have the honour to be

Your faithful and obedient servant

DANIEL O'CONNELL

The state of Ireland and of the Catholic question, seen from a different point of view, may be gathered from the following letter to Mr. Canning, in which Mr. Plunket goes very fully into these subjects :—

Mr. Plunket to Mr. Canning.

MY DEAR SIR, *October* 10, 1826.

You are very kind in leaving me at liberty to remain at home until after Christmas, although I should have been glad of an opportunity of seeing you before the meeting of Parliament. The wish arose rather from my strong impression of the critical state of this country, than from any consciousness that I had much to state which could be new to you. To your question as to the feelings of the Protestant gentlemen in Ireland on the Roman Catholic question, so far as either my personal observation or the results of credible information reaches, I am inclined to think that amongst those who a year since were favourable to the measure, however mortified and offended they are and must be at the senseless violence and scurrility of the Roman Catholic leaders, no material change has taken place—in Parliament, I believe, none whatever. Amongst the enemies there certainly is more violence, and, I fear, as much of determination, in that portion of them who may be considered as partisans. Those who were less pledged, and also many honest men who were wavering, are, I think, rather more disposed to admit the necessity of some measure. They feel anxious about the value of their estates, and alarmed for the security and tranquillity of their persons and families. The first expression is

generally that of indignation against the priests and demagogues; then comes a declaration that things can't go on in their present state, and then the question what is to be done? To this few will answer, "Revive the penal code, or make new restrictive laws, or revive an Orange Government, or go to war." On the whole, my answer to your question is, that whatever change has taken place since we last met is towards acquiescence, though not a very cheerful one, in the proposed experiment of concession. To your second question, or rather to your opinion on the hopelessness of the measure of the forty-shilling freeholders, I answer with my entire conviction that that golden opportunity is gone by. The attempt, unconnected with the main question, would be considered as a declaration of war; and I am quite convinced that, if attached to the general measure, it would sink it; if carried along with it, I apprehend it would, for the present at least, deprive the measure of all its conciliation. That wing I therefore put entirely out of my consideration. The adoption of the ecclesiastical wing becomes every hour more pressing; in my opinion it equals, if it does not exceed, the lay questions in importance. There is a friend of yours (and I hope and believe I may say of mine) who, I think, must now be sensible of the necessity of the State possessing some control over a body whose paramount influence with the Irish population can no longer be doubted. His declaration that the resolution of the House of Commons of 29th April, 1825, could not be acted on without treading on the coronation oath, was, I hope, rather directed against the wording of the resolution, which was incautious in expressing that the provisions for the Roman Catholic clergy should be made *by law*. I believe such was not the intention of the framers of the resolution—it certainly was not

mine—but that a law should be passed enabling the Crown in its discretion to make such provision. I believe this measure, as an accompaniment to the other, is still attainable, so far as depends on the acceptance of it by the Roman Catholic clergy; but when I say I believe so, I have by no means the same confidence as when it was proposed in 1825. There are some busy and mischievous members of that body whose influence, I fear, is now much increased; and although there are some excellent and conscientious persons high amongst them, and although I consider the general body of their clergy as still sound and manageable, yet I am sorry to perceive strong appearance of sourness amongst them all. They complain that they have been called on to disclaim important principles and doctrines, and that when they have done so on oath, they have not been believed; and they feel deeply mortified at having been induced to make public declarations of their readiness to accept payment from the State, and then told that they can't get it. I do not apprehend that they would encourage any insurrectionary movement—on the contrary—nor do I believe that they look to any transfer of the Establishment; but I very much fear that their attachment to the connexion between the two countries is in danger of being somewhat shaken, and that some of them are beginning to look to the possible event of their objects, whatever they may be, lay and ecclesiastical, being obtained through foreign interference. I cannot say that I have any distinct grounds on which I can rest this apprehension, but such is my impression and that of others, who have better means of forming a judgment. Pray have you heard that a man of the name of Edward John Lewis, who was attainted of treason by the Irish Act of 38 George III., is now

private secretary to an archbishop at Paris, and is now in correspondence with some or one of the Roman Catholic leaders in Ireland? I am not much of an alarmist, but I do believe that the French Government are looking more anxiously at this country than hitherto. I do not fear that the disposition to deal with them will make much way here, but a little may be enough to do much mischief, and quite enough to persuade that country that there are ample means of annoyance to be found amongst us.

If after all this you ask me, am I as sanguine as in 1825 of the efficiency of the Roman Catholic measure, if carried, in tranquillizing Ireland, I candidly answer I am not, and every year more of postponement renders me less so. I do at the same time seriously believe that the measure, if soon carried and honestly acted on, will give a fair chance of tranquillity in this country. Of this I am sure, that until this takes place the task of governing Ireland and administering its laws becomes every day more difficult. It is a great misfortune that the experiment should have been made, whether there exists a principle of religious ascendancy in the country stronger than the moral ascendancy which belongs to rank and property. But it has been made successfully, and though only with reference to one subject, it cannot rest there. The new Roman Catholic association, as you may perceive from the public papers, appear to have completely identified themselves with the old one, and are manifestly and daily violating the Act of 1825. So they did last year. Not to prosecute them is a mark of weakness; to prosecute them would be very indiscreet and probably unavailing; it would be in truth to prosecute the Roman Catholic people, who from head to foot make common cause with them. But while this is so, is it just to

prosecute those who disturb the public peace on the Protestant side? The meritorious exertions of many of the Protestant gentlemen in the North keep matters tolerably quiet, but we have a great many fights and some murders; and I believe latterly the Roman Catholic population are getting better armed. So long as we are in profound peace things may drag on in this way; but come war or rumour of war, and who can answer for the consequences? And now, having answered your questions and stated what occurred to me on the state of this country, allow me in my turn to become a very brief queryist as to the course of proceeding in the approaching session. Would it be expedient to take the course of proceeding by resolution and conference thereupon with the Lords? or by Bill? And if the latter, should there be any alterations in the Bill of 1825? And may it not be right to frame clauses for the repeal of the existing laws relating to intercourse with Rome and for the introduction of more mitigated and practicable regulations in their stead? Would there be any chance of conciliating any portion of your friends by confining the measure merely to the repeal of the declaration, and so leaving matters as they stood at the Reformation, when the oath of supremacy was generally taken by the Roman Catholics, as I think, after some time, it could still be, and let the sacramental test rest upon the annual Bill of indemnity? In the way of this arrangement there are considerable difficulties: 1st, the great body of the opposition would, I fear, feel indisposed to it, many of them from really considering it inadequate, but still more from not having any over-anxiety to make the question too smooth and free; 2nd, I doubt whether it would now afford satisfaction in Ireland, particularly if the opposition raise a cry against it; 3rd, would this arrangement be palatable

to the clergy, so as to induce them to declare their willingness to accept payment from the State and to approve of the accompanying conditions and securities? Notwithstanding all these difficulties I should not despair of such a measure being received as a favour and considered as an acquisition by the great body of the Roman Catholics here; but they must first be sure of its being carried, which it cannot be unless taken up by the Government as their act. Though I suggest this, and for my own part am willing to acquiesce in and forward it, yet I do and am so with very considerable doubts, and on the whole am not quite sure that the present failure of the grand measure would not be preferable to the accomplishment of this. I am sorry to take up so much of your time. I need not assure you of my anxious desire to prevent this question pressing too heavily on the Government with which I am sincerely and cordially acting, but I cannot and ought not to conceal from you the extreme alarm which I feel with respect to the safety of this country, and the growing conviction on my mind that things cannot long continue in their present state. I have no objection to your communicating what I have written to any of your friends, if you think it of sufficient importance.

I am always, my dear Sir,
With truth and sincerity,
W. C. PLUNKET.

George Canning wrote, in reply, principally on the subject of the chance of gaining votes on the Roman Catholic question in Parliament, and as to the best form in which to introduce it.

[*Private and confidential.*]

George Canning to Mr. Plunket.

MY DEAR SIR, *F. O. Nov. 8th*, 1826.

The unlucky position in which this question stands and has stood since its *birth*, cannot now be altered. Pride, consistency, character, the dread of being supposed to compromise for the sake of office, and the shame of turning round upon followers whose opinions may have been formed or fostered by example of their leader—all these feelings are as strong upon one side of the question as on the other. (Why should they not be so?) And although if that question were new, and now to be considered for the first time, I daresay that honest and reasonable men on both sides of it might come to a common understanding, yet, in the state in which things now are, I am bound to say plainly to you (in answer to one part of your letter) that I look upon any such approximation as hopeless, and that the notion of the Government's making *any* measure upon this subject "its own act" must be entirely abandoned. The way in which alone this question can be settled, the way in which ultimately, I think, it will be settled, is by the pressure of a Parliamentary majority, creating in the minds of those who are opposed to it a conviction that further resistance is of no avail. But when? That is more than I can venture to foretell. I will therefore proceed at once to answer as well as I am able your question as to the course most advisable this session. You ask me whether it would be best to proceed by resolution and conference, or by Bill? I should say by resolution and by Bill, but by no means by conference. My reason for wishing for a resolution is this: that it

will, I think, be prudent to make our first vote as wide and as attractive as possible; and that a resolution embodying in very general and very temperate terms the opinion so generally prevalent that "*something* must be done, that things cannot remain as they are," would be more likely to conciliate support, even of the undecided, and would be less easy of opposition, than the leave to bring in any Bill,—however judiciously its clauses might be framed. There would also be the advantage of collecting, in the debates upon the resolution, lights for the framing of the Bill.

There might be incidentally other advantages, which, even in the confidence in which I am writing to you, I cannot trust myself fully to explain. But all these advantages in the House of Commons would be lost by submitting an abstract resolution to the Lords. Its vagueness would there be ground of resistance. Not so in the House of Commons, where the resolutions would be to be so instantly followed by a Bill.

But can you figure to yourself such a conversion of the House of Lords as should induce them to affirm (in opposition to their votes of twenty preceding sessions) that something must be done, and then to rest upon their oars for six weeks, in the expectation of what we would send them?

A Bill is the only shape in which the matter can go to the Lords; for they will want to alter our measure, even if they agree to pass it, and every alteration will be a sort of stepping-stone by which converts may cross over.

. . .

Ever, my dear Sir,

With great regard and esteem,

Sincerely and faithfully yours,

GEORGE CANNING.

The dissolution of Parliament referred to in the foregoing correspondence, took place on the 1st of June, 1826. Considerable efforts were made by a certain party to call out the No-popery feeling in England. They were, to some extent, successful, as was proved by the division on the Catholic question in the following session, though the spirit of bigotry was not so strongly evoked on this as on former occasions. But the gains which the anti-Catholic party won in England were, to some extent, counterbalanced by the result of the Irish elections. In many of the counties where the Protestant interest was supposed to be most firmly seated the nominees of the association were returned, the power of the priests for the first time proving too strong for that of the landlord.

The new session of Parliament was opened on the 14th day of November, as it was necessary at once to relieve the distress which existed throughout the agricultural districts of England. The two following letters will sufficiently explain the situation as regarded the Catholic claims.

Mr. Canning's brilliant policy on the Portuguese question kept the House of Commons busy throughout the closing weeks of the year 1826, and the death of the Duke of York on the 5th of January, followed by the illness and resignation of

Lord Liverpool in the following month, postponed the consideration of the Catholic question until March.

Mr. Plunket wrote to Mr. Canning again on the 7th of January, congratulating him on the success of his foreign policy, and giving his views on the then condition of the Catholic question in Ireland :—

[*Confidential.*]

Mr. Plunket to George Canning.

MY DEAR SIR, *January 7th*, 1827.

I have to thank you for your speeches on the war, and for your note enclosing the copy of Lord Grenville's letter. I have sent the copy to Mr. Goulbourne. I believe there is little chance of any clue to the movements of the parties whom we may suspect in this country, unless by watching those who are abroad: such at least has been my experience in all similar cases.

On the subject of the war, nothing remains but to congratulate you on the prospect of its being stifled, or I trust I should rather say extinguished by the firmness and decision of your course. I cannot, however, dismiss the subject without declaring my entire concurrence in *every* sentiment you have expressed. There are persons who are disposed to criticize, but they appear to me to err in supposing that the dangers which they apprehend arise from bringing forward the topics, and not from the state of things which gives rise to them.

There may be times in which the statement of what are called dangerous truths may be an act of the most consummate prudence. I take not the less interest

in considering these matters from my conviction of their bearing (and this not very remotely) on the great question which is always uppermost in my mind.

That question is, I believe, in defiance of friends and foes, advancing rapidly; and I do not anticipate that, on the part of those who are its supporters in Parliament, you will find any disposition to differ from your views either as to the time or manner of bringing it forward; neither in the details do I apprehend any formidable difficulties. The two points to which I have thought it particularly necessary to apply my attention, are, 1st, the regulations and provision for the clergy, and 2nd, the intercourse with Rome. I think I can see my way through both. On the first, I think the *power* of applying the necessary sums out of the ecclesiastical fund should be permanently and absolutely vested in the Crown, so that it should not depend on the pleasure of any one branch of the Legislature to discontinue it; this being secured, the exercise of the power should be entrusted to the discretion of the Crown, the recommendation of persons to receive the ascertained provision for the clergy, according to the several classes to be enumerated in the Act of Parliament, being left to the bishops of the Roman Catholic Church, and to be made through a board to be nominated by the Crown, and whose constitution should be ascertained by the Act. On the second point a similar board should be appointed in Ireland, and another in England, through whom should pass all the instructions or writings either from the Pope or from any person residing out of the country and claiming from him or otherwise any ecclesiastical sanction or authority, and such communication should by such board be transmitted to the secretary of the Lord Lieutenant or the Secretary of State, with an exception

of such cases as in the opinion of the ecclesiastical board should relate to the private religious concerns of individuals; and therefore and with respect to all persons conforming to the provision of the Act, all the provisions of the existing laws against the intercourse with Rome should cease. To provisions of this description I do not believe any objection will be made by the Roman Catholic clergy here, nor do I believe they would scruple (if necessary, and if they saw the question brought forward under such circumstances as to afford a fair probability of its success) to express their approbation even without waiting for the sanction of the Pope's consent.

I am always, my dear Sir,

With the most sincere regard,

Yours faithfully,

W. C. PLUNKET.

The Catholic question was brought before the new House of Commons by Sir F. Burdett, on the 5th of March (1827), in a very able speech. The debate lasted for three sittings. On the second evening Plunket made a most successful speech, in reply to the English Master of the Rolls (Sir John Copley), which, unfortunately, has not been preserved. The most remarkable feature of the debate was Mr. Peel's spirited defence of his conduct in opposing all measures of Catholic Relief, and his disinterested expression of his determination to persevere in the same course. Sir F. Burdett's motion was lost by a majority of four.

On the 27th of March Lord Liverpool resigned, and after ineffectual attempts to form a thorough-going Tory Government, the King sent for Mr. Canning, who succeeded in making up a Cabinet from amongst the more moderate leaders of the Liberal party. Mr. Plunket naturally expected that he should be Mr. Canning's Irish Chancellor; but so strong were the anti-Catholic feelings of George IV., in all matters relating to Ireland, that he would not sanction the appointment.

[*Private.*]

Lord Wellesley to Mr. Plunket.

Phœnix Park, April 19th, 1827.

MY DEAR SIR, *Thursday Evening.*

Lord Manners was here this afternoon, and read to me a letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury, dated Saturday last, in which his grace states that his Majesty, in a conference with his grace the Bishop of London (both of whom attended by royal command), declared that his Majesty's sentiments on the Catholics were precisely the same as those of his royal father, and were quite unshaken. His Majesty had been exposed to great difficulties by the desertion of his Ministers; but that his Majesty was determined to maintain the principles of his royal father respecting the claims of the Roman Catholics under every difficulty by which he might be afflicted.

And his Majesty commanded these prelates to make this declaration known generally to the Established Church, for the purpose of tranquillizing all alarms which

might have arisen from the present state of the administration. His Majesty further commanded the archbishop to write to Lord Manners in the King's name, and to signify his Majesty's desire that Lord Manners would continue to hold the great seal of Ireland for *another year*, in order to afford time to his Majesty to make an arrangement for placing it in proper hands.

Lord Manners (who intended to have resigned the seal in August), in obedience to his Majesty's command, has determined, and through the archbishop signified, his determination to retain the seal until he shall receive his Majesty's further commands.

Lord Manners communicated the archbishop's letter to me without reserve, and expressly authorized me to make the whole matter public; indeed I believe that it is already public in Dublin. Although it is probable that these facts have already reached you through another channel—even perhaps a newspaper—I thought you might find it convenient to receive this intelligence authentically from me.

Believe me always, my dear Sir,
With true respect,
Yours affectionately,
WELLESLEY.

I have not received any communication from Mr. Canning.—W.

Mr. Canning next proposed to make Mr. Plunket Master of the Rolls in England, without prejudice to his further claims. Plunket was actually appointed, but after a few days of office resigned. His reasons for adopting this course

are expressed in the following letter to an old friend :—

[*Private.*]

MY DEAR JOHN, *April 20th*, 1827.

Many thanks for your most friendly letter. Things have taken a turn, to me very distressing.

The result, in short, is, that I am a Peer, and for the present without office. The Rolls I declined, not being able to reconcile myself to act against the feeling of a great number of the profession against the appointment of an Irishman, or rather Irish barrister. Tell my friends not to question me, or to be surprised.

Remember me affectionately to Burrowes.

Yours, my dear John, always,

W. C. PLUNKET.

John Lloyd, Esq.

When Canning found that Mr. Plunket was resolute in his refusal to hold the office of Master of the Rolls in England, he prevailed upon Lord Norbury, who had so long presided in the Irish Court of Common Pleas, to retire from the Bench, and appointed Mr. Plunket Chief Justice in his room, at the same time creating him Baron Plunket of Newton, county Cork, in the Peerage of the United Kingdom.

On retiring from the representation of the University of Dublin, for which he had been member during fifteen years, he thus addressed his former constituents :—

Mr. Plunket to the Provost of Trinity College.

MY DEAR SIR, *London, April 24th*, 1827.

You have already learned from public report that the connexion which has so long subsisted between the University of Dublin and myself, as their representative in Parliament, is about to be dissolved in consequence of His Majesty having graciously signified his intention of elevating me to a Peerage.

I cannot, however, relinquish a situation which has been to me so honourable, and endeared by so many recollections, without expressing to you, and through you to the University of Dublin, and particularly to the Electors of Trinity College, the deep gratitude which I feel for the confidence they have so repeatedly placed in me.

May I request of you and them to accept my assurance that, though I cease to be their representative, I shall continue, whilst I live, to feel the truest interest in their welfare, and that no recollection can be more grateful to my heart than that of the warm and disinterested attachment which I have experienced from them.

The only offering which I can make in return, is my parting advice to them. To cherish the sentiments of honour and independence which have hitherto distinguished them, and to persevere in that wise and temperate course which has preserved them from any share in the party feelings to which our native country has been so long and so unhappily exposed.

I have the honour to be, my dear Sir,

With sincere regard,

Your obliged and faithful servant,

W. C. PLUNKET.

CHAPTER VI.

DEATH OF MR. CANNING—THE NEW ADMINISTRATION—LETTER FROM LORD HOLLAND—BURDETT'S BILL—PLUNKET'S FIRST SPEECH IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS—AGITATION IN IRELAND—THE CLARE ELECTION—SHEIL ON THE STATE OF IRELAND—THE RELIEF BILL OF 1829—SPEECH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON—REPLY OF THE PRIMATE OF IRELAND—PLUNKET'S SPEECH—SUCCESS OF THE MEASURE.

WHEN Mr. Canning raised Mr. Plunket to the Peerage, he conferred that honour upon him as a well-earned reward of public services, and as a distinction suitable to the social rank he had already won for himself; but Mr. Canning no doubt also felt that Lord Plunket's services in the Upper House would be of the utmost importance when the final issue of the great cause in which they were both so deeply interested should come to be decided there.

Never, indeed, had the hopes of the Catholics that their Emancipation would be carried constitutionally and receive the voluntary assent of all sections of the legislature looked brighter than they seemed when Parliament was dissolved on the 2nd of July, 1827. By the death of the Duke of York another Prince had been brought into

the position of heir presumptive to the Crown, who, if he was not a partisan of the Catholics, was known to be neither bigoted nor intractable, and was said to be largely influenced by the desire of popularity. Again, the retirement of Lord Liverpool from public life had thrown the reins of Government into the hands of a sincere and judicious friend to Emancipation, whose power and popularity, already great, were daily increasing. George Canning, at the time of his death, combined with great abilities better opportunities and a more zealous desire to settle the question than any Prime Minister since the Union had possessed.

But on the 8th of August, 1827, Canning died. The aspect of the Catholic question underwent a total change, and Emancipation, as a measure to be voluntarily granted by Parliament, seemed nearly as distant as ever. Nevertheless, their cause, though retarded in one direction, gained an impetus in another so great that, in less than two years, it achieved a more complete triumph than had ever before been anticipated.

On the death of Mr. Canning, Lord Goderich formed an administration which trailed along for five months a feeble body, and expired in the following January. Lord Holland, in the following letter, describes its struggles for existence :—

Lord Holland to Lord Plunket.

MY DEAR LORD, *August 23rd*, 1827.

It has occurred to me that rumours, evidently not unfounded, which are glanced at in the papers, of a misunderstanding between the Court and the Ministry, must excite curiosity at a distance, and though you are likely to have more authentic channels of communication, I have ventured to send you the substance, or rather result, of what I know to be the truth, from a persuasion that should business or accident prevent your other correspondents from writing, even my imperfect information would be acceptable; and, on the other hand, if superfluous and uninteresting, you would at least ascribe it to these two motives—a desire to oblige you, and a coviction that no man in the Three Kingdoms should be better and earlier apprised of the state of things than yourself, if the real interests of the empire, or of Ireland, were to be consulted. One word about Ireland before I speak of the state of Ministry here. It is, I believe, announced that the present Government means to name Alexander Chancellor of Ireland. I need not tell you that no appointment to that office *but one* can give me any perfect satisfaction or real pleasure; but I suppose the unpracticability of that one being granted, and the reasons of it known and submitted to, one must consider Alexander as something better than one had a right to expect. His opinions are *bad*, but his age and habits disqualify him, and his character, temper, and moderation, rescue him from becoming either the leader or tool of any active faction. At least he is better than *Saurin*, and I believe a great push was made by Lord Manners to secure the seals devolving on him, a true descendant of the Orange line. With respect to

the other Consul Designatus, Lord Anglesey, Lord Lieutenant, I do not think any man could be named more willing or so able to promote the objects which you and I think desirable, *provided the Catholics and their friends know how to trust him.* He is in principle as well inclined to them as yourself, and as inclined to urge their plea and fight their battles at least stoutly and openly, as any man, but he is somewhat susceptible to all public attacks, and especially to such as are in any degree liable to the imputation of being menace or intimidation. However, all this is speculation on events that may never happen. He is not yet in Ireland, and may possibly never be; though, if the present Ministry in its present form lasts, he certainly will. On the death of poor Canning the King proposed, and seemed to feel an earnest desire, from respect and gratitude to his memory and approbation of his measures, to adhere to the principles of his Ministry, and to reorganize the Cabinet as exclusively as possible from the materials he had collected and left in it. He naturally enough entrusted one of the oldest members of it with that undertaking, and Lord Lansdowne most judiciously, in my opinion, thought that both in honour and prudence he was called upon to acquiesce in any form in which the substance of Canning's policy and system could be preserved. His colleagues, I am persuaded, felt the handsomeness of his conduct; and there seems to exist neither disunion nor jealousy among them—no suspicion on the part either of Lord Goderich or Canning's friends of a disposition in Lansdowne to grasp at more than the share of power allotted to him, and no reason on his part to apprehend that any are looking to the intolerants in Paris for concert or co-operation. But the proposal of naming Herries to the Exchequer, not made *to* the King by his advisers,

but *by* the King to his advisers, and still more the sudden and peremptory manner in which it was intended to accomplish it, shows, combined with various other circumstances, that the Cabinet, and still more emphatically the new part of the Cabinet, do not possess the whole confidence of the Court, nor even such a portion of it as is absolutely necessary to enable them to conduct public affairs with credit to themselves or advantage to the Crown.

The appointment has indeed been postponed, and all arrangements are deferred till Huskisson's return, but the project is not abandoned. If persisted in it must lead to the retirement of that part of the Ministers who positively object to the appointment, and, not impossibly, to that of the others, who barely acquiesce in it, and are certainly neither parties to, nor approvers of, the manner in which it has been prepared.

Herries, as you probably know, is a man of business, very intelligent in finance, and useful in office, and agreeable,—perhaps too agreeable to a great party in the City; but he has no parliamentary weight, very slight parliamentary talents, is a thorough Tory in principle, an *élève* of Lord Bexley's, a bitter, active, and *insidious* enemy of the Catholics, known to be discontented both with Canning and the late junction with the Whigs, and generally supposed to be as adverse to all Huskisson's commercial policy. It is clear that were he Chancellor of the Exchequer not one-fifth or tenth of the Whigs would vote with Government on questions of finance; and in that case it would be hardly fair to the King himself in Lansdowne and his friends to hold offices conferred upon them on the implied condition of bringing the support of the Whigs in the House of Commons to his Majesty's Government. What this passion for Herries in such high quarters is, or whence

it originates, is perhaps hard to guess,—and if guessed, some would say, not right or safe to mention. Some, indeed, consider it as a mere indication of hostility to the Whigs, some as an additional precaution against prevalence of tolerants in power, others as a stepping-stone to Tories or Ex . . . (*sic*); others maintain that the philters which have provoked it are purely *medical*, while there are who whisper that they have been gilt and sweetened in the City in a way to make them pleasing to the eye and palatable to the taste of royalty itself. There may be a mixture of all these ingredients, the last, I trust, however, excepted. It is frightful to speculate on all the consequences which may ensue from a dissolution of the present Government. The prospect is not encouraging. A retrospect only adds to the regret for poor Canning, and all that has transpired since his death proves the fairness of his dealing and the correctness of his statements. He is not to be blamed for doing no more, but admired for doing so much. I cannot persuade the master* of the house from which I write to think so favourably of him; but I hope now that object of suspicion (I think unjust suspicion) is no more, that the endeavour of others to prevent what evils they can will be looked upon with more favour and indulgence even by the hottest advocates of religious liberty than it was last year.

Whatever his opinions may be, I know his respect and friendship for you to be unalterable, and his deference for your judgment on Irish matters almost unbounded. I am afraid you will hardly decipher my scrawl, which gout in my hand makes yet more unsteady than usual.

If you are good enough to send me some account

* Lord Grenville.

of the feelings of Ireland in return for such news as I could give you, pray direct your letter to Ampthill Park, Ampthill, or to Holland House.

Lady H. begs to be kindly remembered; and

I am, my dear lord,

Truly your obliged

VASSAL HOLLAND.

When the Goderich administration broke down, in January 1827 (on the question of the finance committee), the Duke of Wellington formed a Ministry, principally out of the remains of the last Cabinet (only the most advanced Whigs seceding from him); but in the May following, Mr. Huskisson tendered, or pretended to tender, his resignation, and when it was accepted without hesitation, the other "Canningites" (Lords Dudley and Palmerston, and Mr. Grant) also retired from office. The Iron Duke proceeded at once to consolidate his remaining forces into a compact Tory phalanx. It soon, however, became evident that, strong as the Cabinet was in its unity of purpose, it did not rest upon a basis of popular support broad enough to enable it to check the rapid advance of events in the direction in which they had for some time been moving. The Test and Corporation Acts were repealed by considerable majorities of both Houses, and this decision of Parliament, which was in fact the Dissenters' Emancipation

Act, was generally received in a manner which indicated a belief that more important changes were already at the door — though the High Church party still remained firm in their resistance, Lord Eldon exclaiming "I have been fatigued and distressed by what has lately passed in the House of Lords—I have fought like a lion, but my talons have been cut off."

The hopes of the Catholics having been thus again encouraged, Sir Francis Burdett in May carried a measure of relief through the House of Commons by a majority of six. Thereupon, the Duke of Wellington moved for a conference on the subject between the two Houses; and this being agreed to, on the 9th of June the Marquis of Lansdowne introduced Burdett's bill into the House of Lords, and Lord Plunket made his first speech in that august assembly.

It had been looked forward to with much interest as well because of the great authority which attached to his name in connexion with the question of Catholic Emancipation—as on account of his reputation as an orator. Yet those who still remember his brilliant effort on this occasion, have assured me that never before, either in the Irish or English Houses of Commons, did he more completely captivate the admiration and compel the respect of his audience. It is

deeply to be regretted that, whilst none of his speeches in the House of Lords have been preserved in a corrected form, the report of this his first, and perhaps, most brilliant effort is the most meagre of all. I select, however, a few sentences which I think interesting. He followed immediately after Lord Manners, lately Chancellor of Ireland, who had pointed to the destruction of the Protestant Establishment in Ireland as the necessary consequence of granting Emancipation.

I feel that the Protestant Establishment of Ireland is the very cement of the Union; I find it interwoven with all the essential relations and institutions of the two kingdoms: and I have no hesitation in admitting that if it were destroyed, the very foundations of public security would be shaken, the connexion between England and Ireland dissolved, and the annihilation of private property must follow the ruin of the property of the Church.

I should be happy to suppose that I had misunderstood my noble and learned friend, in the interpretation I put upon the latter part of his argument; and I repeat that if I thought with him, that the consequences of admitting the claim of the Roman Catholics would be such as he anticipated, I would now and for ever resist them. I am most anxious to relieve my own mind and to state the grounds on which I can do so satisfactorily, from this terrible alternative; and I trust your lordships will excuse me, if I go a little back, and briefly call your attention to that period of our history so much adverted to by my noble and learned friend—I mean the period of the Revolution.

Having traced the course of English policy in Ireland from the period of the Revolution down to that of the Union, his lordship proceeded :—

Beware, my lords, how you paralyse that Union; consider how impossible it is effectually to preserve that Union by consolidating the two Establishments, and yet at the same time not to render it perfect by giving equal rights to the people of both countries. That these were the opinions of the illustrious statesmen under whose auspices the Union was commenced and concluded, will not now be disputed. I do not mean to assert that the distinguished individual then at the head of the Government held out expectations to the Roman Catholics, that they would be admitted to political power; but at that period hopes were encouraged that the Union would be the means of facilitating the acquisition of privileges which they could otherwise never have a chance of enjoying. When the Act of Union was carried, I had a seat in the Irish Parliament; I was then a young man, and I felt it my duty to oppose it; I am now an old man, but under the same circumstances, were they again to occur, I should adopt the same course. As, however, the Union was carried, we ought to do our utmost to render it perfect and permanent. I thought in the year 1800, that it was a measure of party; that it would not be acted upon fairly, and that the inferior country would be obliged to suffer without redress. I have been most happily disappointed. I know in no instance in which the interests of Ireland have been brought under the consideration of the Imperial Parliament, in which those interests have not been attended to with justice, with favour, and almost with partiality.

I have been told, and it has been more than once mentioned in the course of this debate, that there is a difference between civil rights and political power. There is, in my opinion, no position more at variance with the fundamental principles of the Constitution. Political power is the guardian of civil rights. The civil rights of subjects are not founded on any written law, they arose out of the essence of the Constitution. Where is the law on which the rights of Protestants to seats in Parliament are founded? There may be, and there are, laws for regulating the right; but the right itself rests on the common principles of the Constitution. That right, like others, may be modified according to circumstances; but still, enjoyment is the general rule, exclusion is only the exception: and those who defend the exclusion are bound to prove its justice by making out its expediency. Our Constitution is anything but an establishment of castes. The whole of it rests and is supported on the free admission of all the people to its benefits. The Throne, the Commons, and the House of Lords, all repose on this fundamental principle of our Constitution, and by this it has been preserved from the fate of other countries. We have heard of public councils in other countries, which have been changed into oligarchies by trenching too much on the executive, or into courts of justice by permitting the executive to intrude too far upon their privileges; but the grand principle of our Constitution is, that the several orders fall back upon the people, and are, I may say, renewed by them. What is the construction of your lordships' house? Is it not gradually renewed and strengthened by an infusion from the body of the people—of those who are conspicuous for their merits, for having served the country, or for the power of serving it by their wealth? The basis it

rests upon is that of public opinion; and its improvement is founded on popular stamina. The lowest man in the State may, by his own merits and the exercise of the prerogative on the part of the sovereign, become a member of this house. What a proportion of your lordships have been elevated to the peerage in the late reign! And does it become those who have been thus taken from the people to talk of castes? With what face could I think of using the privilege which has been conferred upon me by putting my back to the door to shoulder out the Duke of Norfolk? Shame on the ingenuity which could so construe the four corners of the great charter as to turn it to the exclusion of the descendants of those freemen by whose wisdom and valour it was obtained! The position against which I contend is that most erroneous one—that one set of men in a free State should have political power, whilst others should be excluded. This is a condition of things so intolerable, that it is not in human nature to bear it. The subjects of the most absolute despot may, under a beneficent ruler, be happy; but it is impossible that men living under a free government can feel themselves otherwise than in a state of degradation, when they find they are debarred the exercise of their privileges as freemen, because they are said to believe in a religion which is superstitious and idolatrous. In such a state every comfort and enjoyment they may have will be smothered with indignation at the privations to which they are exposed, and the grounds on which their exclusion is defended. Can your lordships then be surprised that you are called upon, year after year, by the Roman Catholics, for the removal of the disabilities under which they labour? I have at all times endeavoured to moderate the zeal of my Roman Catholic countrymen,

by recommending them to make their approaches with temperance to the hostile opinions, and even the unjust prejudices, of those who are opposed to them in this country; but I should greatly abuse any influence which I may possess amongst them, if I were to advise them to cease their application altogether. The best advice I can give is, that they should never cease to pursue the assertion of their claims until they obtain a full recognition of their rights. If there is any effect of their exclusion which I should view with the greatest alarm, it would be, that their voices should be no longer heard in support of their just claims. That, indeed, would be a danger worse, not only than any which result from their exclusion, but than any which could well be imagined from their admission. What, I would ask, is the state of Irish feeling now on this subject? It is well known that in the pursuit of this one object of emancipation, an intensity of feeling pervades the whole of the Catholic population of Ireland, no matter what their rank, condition or state in society. They all join in this pursuit with a degree of unanimity which has no parallel. Laity and clergy are alike associated in following the same object. Over a body thus united, a few individuals have acquired an influence, by which they have the power to excite them to almost any object they may think proper. I would ask your lordships whether that is a state of society which ought to continue in Ireland? Are we to hold our laws, our liberties, our safety, at the discretion of those individuals? Is it a state in which so important a part of the empire should be allowed to remain. Your lordships may complain that a few persons should possess this power over so large a portion of the people. Why, it is not unreasonable to ask, should a few lawyers, who have only their zeal and their talents,

possess this extraordinary influence? Your lordships will find in answering this inquiry that you yourselves are the cause. The people are united, because they are aggrieved. They associate and send forth their complaints, because they consider themselves injured; and your lordships may as well endeavour to avert the current of the blood in the human body, as to prevent those complaints, as long as you suffer the grievances out of which they spring to exist. As long as there are wrongs to be redressed, there will be public assemblies of the people to seek that redress; and in those public assemblies there will be leaders, vying with each other in the race for vulgar popularity. If one sees that he is outstripped by another, he will endeavour to do something to render himself more agreeable to the passions, which, for that purpose, he will be disposed to excite. Do your lordships object to this state of things? Their demagogues are the spawn of your own wrong. You yourselves have created them, and, instead of looking on persons thus engaged as objects of justice, you should rather consider them as victims to injuries of long standing.

The question, then, to be considered is, what are we to do in this case? Are we to stand still, or go backwards, or go forwards? To stand still is impossible. We must then either go forward, or go backward. "Go backward," said the noble lord. "Go backward! re-enact the penal laws, and outlaw a large portion of the people." Excellent tyranny, if it were possible. Make war on your own resources, and tarnish the honour of the country, by weakening it in such a cause. War, my lords, and for what? War, which, when you had carried to a certain extent, you would have to begin again. War, which would leave you a guilty spectacle to scoffing and

exulting Europe. Do your lordships suppose that what is passing in Ireland is an object of indifference to the continent of Europe? Do you suppose that our excellent Constitution and the unexampled prosperity of our career has made us the love and not the envy of the world? There may be some foreign statesman who, taking up his glass, and viewing the dark spot in the western horizon pregnant with the materials of the coming storm, thinks, not that it will break on him, but for him; yet I would answer for it with my life, if there should be an invasion of Ireland, that the Irish people will be found true to the King and the Constitution. But why so? Is it by virtue of the oath of supremacy, or the oath against transubstantiation? They may invoke all the saints in the calendar without giving you much benefit by it; but you will be entitled to their support, by reminding them of the events of the last fifty years, during which, in measures for their improvement, you have endeavoured to counteract the blighting effects of the penalties and persecutions of the preceding eighty. You will be entitled to it, by the hope of freedom which they see yet held out, and the prospect that their difficulties will at no distant day be wholly removed by your liberality.

Lord Lansdowne's motion was rejected by a considerable majority, but next month O'Connell was returned to Parliament for Clare county, and the position of the anti-Catholics became untenable.

Early in January, 1828, the great agitator had opened the new year's campaign with a series of association debates, that lasted for fourteen days.

On one of these occasions it was decided that, in order to bring before the public the unanimity and enthusiasm of the Catholics of Ireland in their desire for Emancipation, perfectly simultaneous meetings should be held throughout the country. Accordingly, on the 13th of January, at exactly the same hour, the congregations of all the chapels in Ireland united in one vehement protest against the injustice under which they suffered. It is scarcely possible to imagine a spectacle morally more imposing than that of nearly the whole population of a country, five millions of souls, gathered in companies over the land, wherever a place of their worship was to be found, all struck in the same attitude of fervent supplication—all demanding, as if with one voice, the restoration of their independence.

The immense import of such displays seemed to be felt everywhere else more immediately than in the English senate. The Irish Orange party understood the crisis, saw the danger that impended, and complained with much truth, that constitutional law was a dead letter in Ireland,—that constitutional authority had been supplanted, and called for uncompromising exertions on the part of the executive, to put down this strange bloodless rebellion: while on the other side of the question, Jeffrey, Sydney Smith, Brougham,

and Campbell pleaded eloquently with their pens for some measure of justice and conciliation. Highly coloured accounts of the state of Ireland were circulated and eagerly read on the Continent. Subscriptions in aid of the Catholic cause were gathered in France, Belgium, Spain, and Italy, and were sent to the Association in Dublin. In America the feeling of sympathy was of course stronger. From all the great cities of the United States, addresses were forwarded, together with liberal subsidies. In the Parliament House at Westminster only, men did not seem to feel that the claims of the Catholics could no longer remain an open question, but must be settled either by an attempt to return to fierce penal laws of suppression, or by granting a measure of substantial relief.

On the 5th of July, 1828, Daniel O'Connell was declared the elected representative of Clare; and the Roman Catholics thus carried an ominous token of their strength and determination to the very doors of Parliament, proving at the same time how inconsistent their exclusion from that assembly long had been with the genius of our representative institutions, by bringing the whole system to a dead-lock in one portion of the kingdom.

The circumstances which led, almost as it

would seem, by chance, to this last demonstration of the extraordinary state into which the Catholic question had come in Ireland, are exceedingly curious. When the Canningites deserted the Duke of Wellington's administration in May, 1828, Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald was placed at the head of the Board of Trade instead of Mr. Grant, who resigned. Mr. Fitzgerald was, therefore, obliged to return to his constituents in the county of Clare, for re-election. But the Catholic Association had pledged itself, on the formation of the Wellington and Peel administration, to oppose every man who should accept office under those statesmen. So it happened that when Mr. Fitzgerald presented himself to the electors of Clare, the Association were bound to bring forward an opposition candidate. But no Protestant gentleman, however liberal might be his views, could be induced to oppose Mr. Fitzgerald, who was most deservedly popular. A friendly neighbour, a kind landlord, and sprung from one of the old county families, he was besides a cabinet minister and a supporter of Catholic Emancipation. The Association had then been reduced to extremities, when the idea was suggested that the great agitator, though he could not swear the form of oath required from a member on taking his seat, should nevertheless oppose Mr.

Fitzgerald for the representation of his native county.

There resided at that time in Dublin, an old Tory gentleman, Sir David Roose, who was a warm personal friend of O'Connell's. This individual met one day in the streets an acquaintance, Mr. Vincent Fitzpatrick, who had been during a long life the untiring advocate of the cause of Emancipation. Sir David, in speaking of Mr. Fitzgerald's chances in Clare, suggested, half-playfully, that O'Connell was the only friend of the Catholics who would have a chance of opposing him successfully. His companion instantly recollected that old John Keogh, the venerable champion of the Catholics, had often declared it to be his conviction that Emancipation could never be granted until a Catholic was duly returned to Parliament, insisting that then the constitutional paradox by which he would be prevented from taking his seat could no longer be defended by any one. This idea was at first so startling that even O'Connell could not be induced to act upon it. His doubts were, however, soon overcome, and the plan was taken up with immense enthusiasm. Money was plentifully subscribed to meet the expenses of the contest; the priests of Clare received orders from the agitators in Dublin to commence immediate operations amongst their

flocks, and the powerful intellectual battery of the "Association" was brought to bear upon the field of the approaching battle. Bishop Doyle blessed O'Connell as he started from Dublin on his journey across Ireland. Wherever, throughout the south and west of the island, the inhabitants of the principal cities saw the open carriage in which he travelled approach their boundaries, they flocked out to meet him, and he was drawn into the town through green triumphal arches erected by the people. When at last he reached the polling-place at Ennis, popular excitement had reached the highest point. Thirty thousand people welcomed him into the town; but by the marvellous influence of the priests perfect order and sobriety attended the whole proceedings.

O'Connell had thus been led to pit himself against a man who might be considered the best champion who could have been selected to fight in the battle of Emancipation on the side of parliamentary delay. The collision between these powerful opponents had been brought about almost by an accident; but once the contest began it was felt that its issue must determine a mightier question than the representation of Clare. "This business," wrote Lord Chancellor Eldon, "must bring the Catholic question to a crisis and a conclusion." And Sir Robert Peel admitted long

afterwards, "that it had been foreseen that the Clare election would be the turning-point of the Catholic question."

The immediate issue lay between the power of the landlords over their tenantry, and that of the priests over their flocks. What men knew to be their interest in this world was thrown into one scale, while in the other was placed what they believed to be their interest in the mysterious world beyond the grave: on the one side was added the prejudice in favour of established habits and feudal obedience—then strong in the minds of the Irish peasant; on the other side was arrayed a sense of accumulated wrongs. On the third day of the polling the struggle had grown hopeless to Mr. Fitzgerald. Indeed, from the first hour of the contest there could be no doubt of its result. In some cases where the landlords had actually marched their tenantry up to the door of the polling-booth to support their candidate, the priest advanced from the other side, and called upon them as Catholics to be true to the religion of their forefathers, and as they hoped to be early released from the torments of purgatory, to vote for "the Liberator." In almost every instance the appeal was successful: the tenantry deserted their landlords *en masse*. Mr. Fitzgerald was obliged to resign the

unavailing contest; and O'Connell was returned, although it was well known that he could not take the oaths, and would, therefore, be precluded from sitting. He boasted immediately on his return that at the next general election he would send twenty-eight members to Parliament in the same way that he had himself been elected. Then followed the progress of Mr. Lawless through the north of Ireland, at the head of from 25,000 to 30,000 Catholics, marching with all the circumstances of an army through the Protestant districts of Ireland. But the most curious and awful symptom was the perfect order and sullen calm that accompanied this extraordinary development of physical power, pointing to the depth and gravity of the resolve that prompted such demonstrations, and at the same time reined in the energies of the nation for the great endeavour, in complete subordination to the leaders who had secured their confidence. Mr. Sheil, in the following passage, eloquently describes the state of Ireland at the moment :—

The Catholics have attained the perfection of national organization. They have almost reached the excellence of military array. But an immense population thus united, thus affiliated, thus controlled, in such a state of complete subordination, affords matter for the most solemn meditation. A feeling of expectation has

begun to manifest itself among the people; they put painful questions. But if the state of the Catholics be deserving of attention, that of the Protestants calls also for remark. It is in vain for us to hide it from ourselves. The Protestants are becoming every day more alienated by our display of power; the great proprietors, and all who have influence in the State, are anxious for a settlement of the question; but still their pride is wounded, and they see with some disrelish the attitude of just equality which we have assumed. Our Protestant advocates, with some exceptions, declined to attend our late meetings. As individuals I hold them in no sort of account; but their absence is a feature in the existing circumstances of the country. It is clear that the division between Catholics and Protestants is widening. They were before parted, but they are now rent asunder; and while the Catholic Association rises up from the indignant passions of one great section of the community, the Brunswick Club is springing out of the irritated pride and sectarian rancour of the Protestants of Ireland. The Catholic Association owes its parentage to heavy wrong operating on deeply sensitive and strongly susceptible feelings. The Protestant Association has its birth in the hereditary love of power and inveterate habits of domination. These two great rivals are brought into political existence, and enter the lists against each other. As yet they have not engaged in the great struggle—they have not closed in the combat —but as they advance upon each other and collect their might, it is easy to discern the terrible passions by which they are influenced, and the full determination with which they rush to the encounter. Meanwhile the Government stand by, and the Minister folds his arms as if he were a mere indifferent observer, and the terrific contest only afforded him a spectacle for the amusement

of his official leisure. He sits as if two gladiators were crossing their swords for his recreation. *The Cabinet seems to be little better than a box in an amphitheatre, from whence his Majesty's Ministers may survey the business of blood.*

Under the pressure of this state of things, in the following year (1829), the King's Speech advised Emancipation. A Bill for suppressing the Catholic Association (as a preliminary to granting Emancipation) passed both Houses unanimously; and on the 10th of March the Catholic Emancipation Bill was read a first time, and passed without opposition. But in five days all the hot Protestant feeling of the land was aroused; nine hundred and fifty-seven petitions were presented; that from the City of London signed by more than a hundred thousand householders! On the 17th of March, the Bill, nevertheless, passed to a second reading; and on the 30th to a third, with large majorities at each stage of the debate. On the 31st of March it was carried to the House of Lords by Mr. Peel, and read a first time; and two days later the debate on the second reading began. On this occasion the old guard of the anti-Catholics, rallied by Eldon, made their final desperate stand against Emancipation; and Lord Plunket had the satisfaction of speaking nearly the last words of honest

triumph over their defeat, ere the measure he had so long advocated passed into law.

The Duke of Wellington opened the debate, by moving the order of the day for going into the second reading of the Bill. In recanting his former strenuous opposition, he explained that he had since obtained means of becoming more intimately acquainted with the state of the question, and of Ireland as affected by it. Reviewing the circumstances that attended the Clare election, and the events that followed it, he pointed to Emancipation as the only alternative for civil war. How solemn must have been the crisis in the affairs of the empire when the old Marshal used these words :—

It has been my fortune to have seen much of war—more than most men. I have been actively engaged in military affairs from boyhood until I have grown grey. My life has been passed in familiarity with scenes of death and human suffering. Circumstances have placed me in countries where the war was internal, between opposite parties of the same nation ; and rather than a country I loved should be visited with calamities which I have seen, with the unutterable horrors of civil war, I would run any risk, I would make any sacrifice, I would freely lay down my life. There is nothing which destroys property and prosperity, and demoralizes character to the extent which civil war does. By it the hand of man is raised against his neighbour, against his brother, and against his father ; the servant betrays his

master, the master ruins his servant. Yet this is the resource to which we must have looked: these are the means which we must have applied, in order to put an end to this state of things, if we had not embraced the option of bringing forward this measure, for which I hold myself responsible.

He then reminded the House that the Bill made it necessary that Roman Catholic members should take the oath of allegiance, which contained a great part of the old oath of supremacy, and that the latter had become much less important since the extinction of the House of Stuart. He explained to the House that the proposed measure permitted Roman Catholics to keep every office of the State, except a few connected with the administration of justice, and enabled them to sit as members of Parliament. He said the motive that prompted him at once to make such large concessions was his recollection of the consequences that had followed from the insufficient Acts of 1782 and of 1793, when every restriction on concession only increased the demands of the Roman Catholics, and gave them fresh power to enforce their wishes.

The Duke was replied to by his Grace of Canterbury and by the Primate of Ireland. The speech of the latter was, I think, the ablest delivered on that side of the question during the

arguments, and reads in some passages like prophecy. The debate was continued on the following day without any great brilliancy, but on the next, the 4th of April, all the great legal authorities of the House gave their opinions, and Lord Grey advocated the measure in a noble and statesmanlike oration. Lord Eldon closed the debate on the part of the anti-Catholics, and was followed by Lord Plunket, who rising from his place beside the Duke of Wellington, said :*—

I confess, my lords, I have reserved myself to this period of the debate in consequence of a declaration made by the noble earl, when commenting on some of the petitions on this subject which the noble and learned lord presented, that he would take an opportunity, when the measure then in contemplation came before your lordships, to show that, in its character, it was opposed to the principles of the Protestant religion in England, and to the fundamental laws of the Constitution established at the period of the Reformation and the Revolution ; all this, he said, he would undertake, when the time came, to prove to demonstration. My lords, after the arguments of my noble and learned friend on the woolsack (Lord Lyndhurst) and my noble friend behind me (Earl Grey), I must own I listened with intense curiosity to the arguments adduced by the noble and learned lord as an answer to my noble friends. I must, however, say, my lords, that in this I have been most completely, but

* The following speech, though not corrected by Lord Plunket himself, was evidently very carefully taken down at the time, and is much the best of the reports we have of his orations in the House of Lords.

most agreeably, disappointed. For, my lords, I will say, without the most remote approach to disrespect for him, that the noble and learned lord has left all these alarming positions of his in precisely the same position they were in before he arose; I mean without any confirmation, save that of his own undoubtedly high authority, but altogether unsustained by argument, by fact, or by historical documents. It is not my intention to delay your lordships by going through all the arguments which have been stated to the House; but I feel it due to the House, to the public, to myself, that after having supported this measure for upwards of thirty years, I should not now see it carried to a happy consummation without stating some of the grounds on which I support it. My lords, I shall go at once to what is essential to the Act, and I shall defend it on the broad ground that it is necessary to the safety, if not the existence, of the country.

I feel, my lords, that it became the duty of his Majesty's Government to look at the measure, in the first instance, as a great statesman ought to look at it,—with reference to the situation of Ireland, with reference to the circumstances of the times, and, finally, with reference to what ought to be done to meet exigencies in their nature so urgent and peculiar.

Much has been said on the question of expediency in the abstract, and the argument has been very generally used,—that it cannot, and ought not, to be taken as decisive of the wisdom or justice of adopting any measure. I am prepared to concede something to that as a general caution; but what said a right reverend prelate last night, in his address to your lordships? "If," said that right reverend prelate, "there be no principle of justice violated by the

concession, then I think expediency a sufficient and a justifiable ground." What principle of justice is there violated by this measure? Is it a violation of any principle to admit millions of our countrymen to their undoubted privileges as citizens? How are they excluded from these privileges? Is it not by Acts of Parliament, founded on this very principle of expediency? If, then, it be demonstrated that the expediency on which the exclusion was founded has passed away, that the cause why it was called into operation is now overborne by others a thousand times more powerful, —if the country has been brought into difficulties and danger from acting on the ground of expediency, are not his Majesty's Ministers justified in making the principle of expediency, not of justice, the principle of their actions? I have always understood that the maxim laid down by my noble friend—not dissented from by the noble and learned lord who has just sat down—as the maxim of the Constitution, and of every sound and free constitution is, that privileges and franchises are the rights of all the people, that the principle of exclusion is the exception, and that the rights of the people are not to be suspended upon any principle but that of expediency, or, I may say, political necessity, of the highest degree. The people, in this case, claim the right to make laws and to administer the laws. They claim the right to be admitted to sit in Parliament, and to hold the executive offices of the State; and before you take away the common right of the subject, you must show that not a supposititious, but a real, necessity exists. Is this claim to respect the principle of right and justice nothing? When it is clearly proved that expediency is against the principle of exclusion, is that nothing? I state then, in my judgment, that the exclu-

sion is a violation both of justice and expediency. We stand, my lords, on both these principles.

What do we state as the grounds of our expediency, but danger to the country? Both justice and expediency, then, are in favour of the measure. It is a mistake, my lords, to suppose that Ireland has been, in respect to its civil government, an ill-governed country. I will take upon me to say that, for the last fifty years, the conduct of Great Britain to Ireland, under the circumstances of the two countries, has been founded on a wise and liberal policy. From that period, when the country was roused to a sense of its situation,—when our eyes were first opened to the circumstances of Ireland, the system of law acted on with regard to civil policy has been widely different from that acted upon with regard to religion; and the consequence has been that effects the most different have been produced. From that time Ireland began to advance, and she has advanced rapidly in all that constitutes civil prosperity, and proceeded with mighty strides in the acquisition both of wealth and knowledge.

From 1793, when the principal relaxing law was passed, Ireland assumed a place among nations; she advanced in the scale of national prosperity, in a manner beyond all former precedents and which baffled calculation. Great advantages accrued to the country, my lords, from that law;—the people were raised infinitely above their former condition—the whole people; for the benefit was not confined to Catholics or Protestants exclusively, but embraced the whole of the people in its operations and effects. Such were the consequences of the wisdom of that measure: the country was raised to a situation in the scale of nations which she had never before attained. Formerly abject, miserable, and dis-

spirited, Ireland now became a powerful assistant of this great empire, and was associated with her in the noble task assigned her,—in the high destiny of administering the affairs and promoting the civilization of the world. But in the midst of these advantages and improvements —floating upon this tide of prosperity—the rapidity and fulness of which outstripped the most sanguine expectations, what is the situation of Ireland in a political point of view? The country is, at the same moment, in a state of unexampled civil prosperity, and in a state of unexampled political danger. My lords, it may appear paradoxical to say so, but such is the absolute fact; and what, I ask, is the irresistible inference from this unexampled civil prosperity and unexampled political danger that, at one and the same time, prevail in Ireland? Is it not evident that the political system upon which the affairs of the country have been administered is defective? This fact—I mean the condition of Ireland—cannot be denied, and whilst it clearly shows the evil and its cause, it also points out the proper remedy. It shows that the mischief consists in the political situation of the country,—that that situation, so dangerous to the State, has been occasioned by political laws, and that the way to cure the evil is by repealing these laws. If, under the system pursued with regard to her civil concerns, Ireland has outstripped all calculation in point of civil prosperity, and if, in direct opposition to this, she suffers under political laws that expose her to a high degree of political danger, why not remove that danger by abrogating these laws? My lords, this is the only remedy, and it is that proposed to be adopted by the noble Duke at the head of his Majesty's Government. My lords, I charge the vice on the laws; it is the vice and the evil which have long

afflicted the country. I say, change the laws, and you will effect a cure. The noble Duke wishes to put a stop to the mischief in this way, and it affords the only practicable method of accomplishing our object; he is sensible of the cause, and by removing it, he proposes to eradicate the evil.

My lords, you have passed a law to put down the Catholic Association. In this you have done wisely; but you have done wisely only because the measure for the suppression of the Association is to be followed up by other laws, of which the bill now under consideration is to form one. Without this measure, the Suppression Bill would not be successful in putting down the Catholic Association, nor would it give peace to the country. My lords, it is impossible to stifle the voice of the Irish people in this manner. I do not make these statements upon fanciful or theoretical grounds—I speak from experience. The fact is, that persons who have not resided in the country can form no idea of the state of things that exist in it; they cannot understand the way in which the subsisting odious distinctions operate. My lords, it is not a hostility of one part of the kingdom against another that is occasioned by them,—it is not a hostility between sect and sect, but a hostility of individual to individual, —a hostility that finds its way into the bosoms of families,—that pervades all the relations of life, and vitiates the whole system of society. It is the vice growing out of the existing system; it pervades the entire country—nothing is too minute, nothing too great for it; it interferes with everything, and disturbs everything,—it enters into all affairs,—it affects all ranks and classes; it is found among the rich and the poor, the enlightened, the ignorant, the good, and the licentious, —it mingles with all transactions,—it breaks down all

the barriers of duty,—it makes a part of every business,—it poisons all enjoyment,—it mixes itself up with, and puts a stop to the ordinary intercourse between man and man; and what are the consequences? From one end of Ireland to the other, the two classes are, I do not say in direct and undisguised hostility, but in a state very closely approximating to hostility,—in a state of dissatisfaction and discontent, which renders it impossible, so long as this condition of things shall continue, to adopt measures necessary to the safety and tranquillity of the country. So long as matters remain in this state,—so long as the difference of protection and encouragement afforded to the professors of the two religions shall generate and encourage the feeling now prevalent,—it is utterly impossible that any plan can be effectual in providing for the safety of Ireland.

The remonstrances which came from Ireland, more particularly from the lower classes—and they constitute the majority of the petitioners on this subject—unlike the petitions of the people of this country, are not founded on religious feeling. The greater part of the Irish petitioners against the Catholics have no particular anxiety for a Protestant establishment. The petitioners are, many of them, Dissenters, and cannot be supposed to be influenced by the same feeling in this respect as the members of the Established Church who have petitioned in England. I do not speak thus of the Irish petitioners through any desire to disparage or attack them, but merely for the purpose of showing that their remonstrances are not, as is the case with the English petitions, founded on religious feeling. I do not say that the Irish petitions are founded on a principle of monopoly—so sordid a motive I shall not attribute to the petitioners of either part of the country. My lords,

the fact is, the remonstrances of the Irish petitioners are dictated by a desire to maintain Protestant superiority. This is the delusion under which they labour: they resolve, if possible, to defend a privilege which enables them to oppress their neighbours; and they express their resentment at the idea of being deprived of the privilege of insulting their neighbours—a privilege which the law has given them. It is this that is felt throughout Ireland in every transaction of life; it is this that enters into all sorts of human dealing—the artificial superiority of the Protestants! a superiority derived from the political laws of the land, and leaning upon these laws for support. Protestant superiority! irritating to others, injurious to themselves. It is this that elevates the brow of the Protestant; and further, Protestant superiority, implying Catholic degradation. It is this that sinks deeply into, and corrodes the heart of the Catholic, till with elastic energy it shakes off the galling load and rebels. My lords, as an illustration of the operation of this boasted superiority, a Protestant on hearing of this measure says at once, "What! shall a Catholic have the privilege of a Protestant? Promote a Roman Catholic to the bench? Make a Roman Catholic a judge? How can I be safe if a Roman Catholic be associated with Protestants in the administration of the laws?" Very well; but the Roman Catholic says, "Am I safe when the laws are exclusively administered by Protestants?" The answer is quick. "O yes, that is very good for you; quite good enough: but as regards the Protestants it is a different thing." In the discussions which have taken place in your lordships' House, a moderate tone has been assumed, much more moderate than elsewhere; and noble lords simply say, "True, Roman Catholics are very good

people, worthy, excellent men, greatly to be respected, and we like them much; we admit it is a hardship, a great hardship, that they should be excluded from a fair participation in civil privileges; but respectable as they are, principles of State policy, and the Constitution, as founded at the period of the Revolution, require it, and they must be excluded!" Is this wise or politic? Moderate as the language is, is it consistent with the dictates of sound sense and prudence? But this is the language of the members of the upper classes who are opposed to concession. What is the language of the lower classes of society who have similar views? Exulting in their superiority, and determined to exclude the Catholic at all hazards, they address him thus:—"Oh! you are not to be believed on your oath; you are an idolater. What right have you to pretend to the privileges of us Protestants?" The lower classes of Protestants gain nothing by the exclusion of the Catholics; they derive no benefits from their exclusive privileges, their fancied superiority; all this is not to them the value of a pin's point, they would not lose anything by having their exclusive privileges taken away; the Catholics would be gainers, but the Protestants would not forfeit one of the benefits of the Constitution thereby: and it is this that constitutes the insult. The very worthlessness, as regards the Protestants, of what is withheld, renders the denial of it to the Catholics the more insulting, galling, degrading, and intolerable. What are the consequences? Your lordships have acknowledged and felt them; they fall upon you in your laws, which are defied and rendered powerless. Individuals are gathered into powerful and dangerous bodies. The law creates the organization. The insults put upon the people by the law, confer on

them a common principle of union. My lords, it is not individuals who are insulted and degraded,—it is not a few only who are personally insulted; the insult and the injury extend through all classes,—they are common to all, and unite all in one common bond. There is not in Ireland an individual writhing under unmerited degradation who does not know that he, in common with all others of his persuasion, is injured and insulted. The effect of this is unavoidable; it unites all in one common association. The noble and learned lord (Eldon) has said, "that the mass of the people do not care about Catholic emancipation; that it is put in the front by parties who wish to promote Jacobinical ends, but that the people, in fact, care little or nothing about it." Now it appears rather awkward, if Catholic emancipation be not a question that carries with it the popular feeling, that it should have been put forward as a bait for the multitude, when Jacobinical purposes were to be served. The noble and learned lord's argument against the popularity of emancipation proves it to be popular.

The Earl of Eldon—

My observation applied to the proceedings that took place in 1798.

Lord Plunket—

The noble and learned lord says his observations apply to the events of 1798; but I cannot suppose that the noble and learned lord would, in 1829, have applied the circumstances of 1798 as an argument against the measure, unless the noble and learned lord had supposed that those circumstances bear a sufficiently close resemblance to the events of the present day to justify the

reference. Such is the effect (whether intended to be produced or not) which the noble and learned lord's observation is calculated to carry with it. The remark insinuates a comparison—hints at a resemblance between past and present circumstances—if it means anything.

The Earl of Eldon disclaimed any intention to institute a comparison between the affairs of 1798 and 1829.

Lord Plunket—

I am sure that if the comparison has not been made by the noble and learned lord, it has been used by some other noble peer in the course of the debate. The thing has been said. But if the noble and learned lord does not hold the opinion, I shall not endeavour to fasten on the noble and learned lord the imputation of doing so; for I feel, my lords, that nothing can be more unjust than an attempt to fasten on any individual, or any class of individuals, opinions and principles which they disclaim. I shall merely say that there were once those who held and advocated the opinions referred to; if nobody holds them now, so much the better; but there was a time when they were put forward rather ostentatiously; and, among others, by a noble lord now no more, for whom I have always felt a deep respect, augmented since his death by a recollection of the services which the noble lord rendered to his country. It has been said repeatedly, "Why talk of emancipation? The people do not care about it." The question was asked of a witness before the committee, "Do the Roman Catholics of Ireland care the drop of ink in this pen for Catholic emancipation?" And the answer of the individual witness was, "They do not." But this,

my lords, is as far from being the general, as it is far from being the true, opinion. It is not merely Catholic orators, or persons who might sit in Parliament, who press for emancipation; the lower classes also feel interested in the favourable decision of the question, and do not stand by, as is alleged, careless of the result.

How does the fact turn out to be? I appeal to recent experience, which proves that the insult to the individual is felt to be an insult to all,—that they feel the grievance imposed on them from the highest to the lowest,—that there is one electric chain which binds together in community of feeling and suffering all ranks and classes, which unites in one common sentiment, talent and ignorance, poverty and wealth, virtue and licentiousness; and the result is, on the part of all, a common principle of resistance. My lords, it is not a rabble, but a wealthy and enlightened people, that are bound together in this confederation—a confederation, not, perhaps, hostile to the State, but certainly beyond the power of the State to repress. They are bound together to act in opposition to the laws, by insults offered to two of the strongest principles of our nature, —insults offered to their persons and to their religion. This is admitted—we have become sensible of the fact; the confederacy has gone beyond a privileged resistance, and has shown itself in a form alarming to the State. But are we to take fright at a monster of our own creation, the putting an end to which depends on our own will? How can matters be otherwise than they are at present? We exclude the Roman Catholics from the privileges of the State; they feel this to be an insult and a grievance—they must so feel, and express it; to express their grievance they must associate; if the

grievance continue they must have people to act for and represent them; these people will gradually become the masters of those whom they were appointed to represent,—they will, by degrees, grow intoxicated with power, and proceed to do, not merely that for the purpose of doing which they were selected, but everything extravagant, dangerous, and ridiculous;—and, in one word, my lords, they must become the Roman Catholic Association. But if there were no grievances to complain of, there would be no Catholic Association; so long as the grievances continue, a claim will be made by the people for redress;—so long as they shall make this claim they will be collected in bodies;—so long as they shall be thus collected, they will have leaders, and the continued existence of the grievances occasion the sedition and licentiousness of the Roman Catholic Association. Thus is produced a dangerous opposition to the law. Some say, "Trust to time and the operation of healing measures for a remedy." But time will not lessen the danger—for such evils time can afford no remedy; and as to healing measures, there is no room for any that falls short of the present. Delay will only increase the danger, which must go on aggravating from day to day, and from hour to hour.

During the last fifty years the Catholics have advanced in wealth, in knowledge, and in numbers; and looking at this undoubted fact, I ask, from what source is danger most to be dreaded? If we persist in this most unnecessary, most unwise, and most unjust sentence of exclusion, we cannot but generate, spread, keep alive, and augment discontent and dissatisfaction; and then, I again demand, from what quarter is danger to be most apprehended? Every accumulation of wealth, knowledge, and numbers, which in a whole-

some state of society would be ingredients of natural prosperity, becomes, in the existing condition of things, an element and root of danger. Who are the most troublesome persons in Ireland, and if not now dangerous, who may soonest become so? They are precisely those who are at this moment most rapidly increasing in wealth, knowledge, intelligence, and power,—who are advancing the fastest upon the tide of national prosperity,—who would be amongst the most valuable defenders of our institutions, but for the stigma of exclusion,—that vice of our Constitution, which converts what should be the most wholesome nutriment of the State into the deadliest poison. Such persons as I have described are exactly those who feel most keenly the ignominious and irritating disabilities to which they are subjected. Until we correct the vice of exclusion, until we remove this exception to our free Constitution, the evil will go on increasing. I feel grateful to noble lords who propose, as remedies for the evils of Ireland, the extension of employment and education among her population. These are recommended as the best means of raising the character, and removing the discontents of the Irish people,—the most effectual methods of restoring peace and tranquillity. Employment and education, my lords, are doubtless good in themselves; but the effect of promoting the education of the people, and increasing their wealth and intelligence, will not be what is expected if unaccompanied by other measures. The effect of all these proceedings—leaving the laws untouched as they are—will be, that if you make Ireland three times as prosperous as she is at present, you will make her three times as dangerous. It is in vain, then, while this most unjust, impolitic, and irritating system is continued, to talk of producing peace, good order, and affection to the

State, by ameliorating the condition of the people, promoting the progress of civilization among them, and increasing their intelligence and wealth. The object can never be obtained in that way.

The position in which you are placed, my lords, is this: you have undertaken an impossible problem in legislation—that of governing the great mass of a wealthy and intelligent people, surrounded by free institutions, on the principle of excluding them from any share in the common privileges and benefits of these institutions. Such an undertaking is absolutely chimerical. I cannot approve of the attempt to govern the people of a free State under the notion that they are bad subjects; or upon the principle of excluding them from the privileges of good subjects. If they are to be excluded from those privileges and rights to which they are as justly entitled as their Protestant fellow-subjects, who form but a small minority in the country, it is utterly impossible that they should not be discontented and dangerous. The attempt to govern a people on such a principle is perfectly wild and impracticable. It is an endeavour to found a Government which shall rest neither upon the basis of absolute power, nor on that of popular principles. It is a solecism in legislation, it can be good neither in theory nor in practice—and it is condemned by every civilized country except our own. The only way in which it is possible to remove dissatisfaction, and put an end to all reasonable apprehensions of danger from the people of Ireland, is to restore them to the rights and privileges of British subjects; at a time when there exists no necessity for their exclusion, when in point of fact necessity and expediency both point the other way. I have not heard any other practical remedy offered for the evils of Ireland. It is true the noble and learned lord (Eldon) talked a

good deal on the subject, and I listened to the noble and learned lord with great anxiety and attention, yet (I say it without meaning the least disrespect,) I was not able to comprehend his meaning. The noble and learned lord said, the common law of the country afforded a remedy for all the evils of Ireland. What! for all the grievances that afflict that country? The noble and learned lord could not have intended to say this in jest or mockery, he must have said it in serious earnest; yet, I repeat, I cannot possibly understand the noble and learned lord when he makes such an assertion. The common law of the country a remedy for the evils of Ireland! Does the noble and learned lord mean to say, that it is sufficient even for the purposes of punishment, not to talk of improvement? If so, I cannot understand the noble and learned lord—the proposition quite transcends my faculties, which are incapable of taking it in. When I see the evils of Ireland in their full extent before my eyes, am I to be told, my lords, that the common law of the country affords a remedy for the mischief? Whilst temples are throbbing and veins consuming with the unassuaged hectic, are we to be directed to the common law as a remedy for the disease? It is fallacious and idle to talk of it. The present state of things cannot be allowed to go on. When we consider the scenes that took place last year, no Government in its senses can permit them to continue,—no Government can so expose the most valuable institutions of the British empire to the constant and imminent hazard of destruction from these perpetual and interminable divisions, distractions, and feuds among the population. The tenant was taken out of the hands of his landlord—the bonds of society were dissolved—discontent became a force fitted to accomplish anything, all things were sucked into the whirling vortex of a body

which existed beyond, in despite of, and against the State. I do not say it now exists; a law has been passed to put it down—but was this suppression owing to that law? No—it was due to the prospect of the measure now debated—it fled like a guilty thing before the dawn of this wise, just, expedient, and magnanimous measure. But if this Bill be not carried, believe me, my lords, that sleeping or waking, in action or repose, there does and will exist a force beyond the Government of the empire—holding the elements of society in a state of solution—it being uncertain what principles will rise, or what be precipitated—a whirlpool drawing talent and imbecility—vice and virtue—knowledge and ignorance—wealth and poverty;—sucking all into its own overwhelming vortex. In one word, we come to the alternative of either employing military force to govern the country, or governing it by just laws. This is the only choice remaining to us—the choice between military force, and correcting the law, and rendering it applicable to the present state of the country. Government has chosen the latter part of the alternative, and, with the concurrence of his Majesty, brought this wise, beneficial measure under the consideration of Parliament. Already has it received the approbation of the Lower House, by an extraordinary majority, and I hope the result will be similar in your lordships' House.

The noble duke at the head of the Government stated that he was not induced to propose this measure by any danger, great and high as it might appear, of an immediate explosion in Ireland. My lords, it is not the object of the Roman Catholics to violate the law or commit a breach of the public peace. It is not their object to challenge their Protestant fellow-subjects to enter the field and fight it out fairly and openly like

undisguised enemies, and thus put an end to the question at once: but the Roman Catholics do claim, with the utmost earnestness and pertinacity, the restoration of their just rights and privileges as British subjects; and as it is not in human nature that they shall cease loudly to claim them as long as they are withheld, they have already been withheld too long, and it can be no matter of surprise to any intelligent person who knows the state of Ireland, and the feelings by which people must be agitated under such circumstances, that discontents have been highly aggravated.

What has protected us, my lords, from the dangers which surrounded us? First, the vigilance of Government; and secondly, the unwillingness of the people to act in the state of profound peace with which God has so long blessed us, and in the absence of a foreign enemy. This, together with the comparatively mild plan lately pursued by Government, has saved us from the terrible infliction, to the risk of which our policy with respect to the Roman Catholics has exposed us. Happily, Government has, at length, thoroughly investigated the real sources of the discontents and evils by which Ireland has been so long agitated; happily, it has had recourse to the only true and effectual remedy; and most fortunately, for the best interests of the empire, the noble duke has brought down to Parliament this salutary measure, recommended to the consideration of the legislature by his Majesty. Will it be pretended that Government should have exposed us to the hazard of so dreadful a calamity as that to which I have alluded? Ought Government to have waited till the period of pressing danger had arrived? Does it not act more wisely in seizing this hour of general and profound tranquillity, when the matter can be fairly

investigated, in pursuance of the advice contained in the speech from the Throne, that Parliament should examine into the whole state of Ireland, with a view to provide a remedy for the evils with which it is afflicted? Whether this measure be really calculated to produce all the good effects anticipated from it, it is for your lordships to judge; but I confidently assert, that it is perfectly consistent with that which his Majesty recommended,—the safety of the Protestant Constitution in Church and State. My lords, bold language has been held upon this subject. It has been stated that this measure will subvert the Protestant religion, as by law established in these countries. No person pretends to say it is directly intended or calculated to inflict an injury on our religion, but the opponents of the measure assert, that although the effect of it may not be immediately and directly to destroy the foundations of the Protestant establishment, yet that such is its indirect tendency, and that there is great reason to apprehend such will be its remote result. Lay the measure by the side of the Bill of Rights or the coronation oath, and it will appear that it does not trench upon either—that it contains no attack upon the Church, its ceremonies, doctrines, or possessions. By the way, much stress is not laid upon the coronation oath by your lordships; for although much has been said on that subject out of doors, little has been heard about it in the course of this debate, and the point seems to be in a great measure abandoned; and certainly the question has in reality nothing to do with the coronation oath, upon which the present measure has not the least tendency to trench. But it is said that, although not calculated directly to overthrow the Church establishment, the measure has a tendency to do so indirectly, circuitously

and after a long process of time. It is said that, eventually, it must lead to something calculated to affect the interests of the Church. Noble lords and right reverend prelates who use this argument should handle it with great caution and delicacy. They ought to consider, that if there be any danger at all it is an argumentative and remote danger; and they who object to the measure for these reasons, should be sure of their grounds before they sacrifice a great and immediate good, in order to avoid a remote and possible evil. They are to reflect, that if this is to be considered as a good measure in itself exclusively of its supposed dangerous tendency with regard to the Church, they ought to be well assured of that danger before they lose a positive good for the sake of a contingency, and run into an immediate danger to escape the chance of a future one.

I can assure the right reverend prelates on the opposite bench, that I entertain for their character and station the highest possible respect. I speak not through an unfriendly feeling towards them; on the contrary, I feel a sentiment of an entirely different kind for the order to which they belong. But what are the dangers which they apprehend? They assume two things in their estimate of these dangers: first, they assume it as a principle that it must in the nature of things be the object of the Roman Catholics, whether they obtain the privileges which they seek or not, to overthrow the Protestant Church; and, secondly, that entertaining the wish to overthrow the Protestant Church, the Roman Catholics will be able to effectuate it by means of this measure. The concurrence of these two things is obviously necessary in order to constitute the danger and give any plausibility to the objection.

When I was stating the supposed hostility of the Roman Catholics to our Protestant establishment, I thought I heard a cheer proceeding from some quarter, as if there is in your lordships' House an individual who believes in the existence of that feeling in the minds of the Roman Catholics. I do not charge any one with bigotry; I take it for granted that the right reverend prelates are true and sincere friends to civil and religious liberty; but what is the hostility which they dread? A most reverend prelate (the Archbishop of York) candidly bore testimony to the virtues of many Roman Catholics with whom he happened to be acquainted; and this he did frankly, however much he differed from them in religious opinions. Other peers bore testimony to the character, integrity, and honour of the Roman Catholics. One opponent of the measure, indeed, went so far as to call the Roman Catholics idolaters; but, of course, that observation applies in a religious sense, and does not affect their moral or civil characters. Well, then, these persons are willing to swear—and by this measure they are called upon to swear—that they have no hostility to the Protestant Church. The oath inserted in this Act requires them to abjure every notion, and feeling, and intention of hostility to the Protestant Established Church. Now, it is certainly rather an awkward kind of argument to say that a man is most respectable in private and domestic life, and a very excellent moral character, and yet he is not to be believed on his oath. I could not exactly understand a noble peer who should say, "You are no doubt a very honourable man, but I shall not believe you on your oath." But if you cannot believe the oaths or assertions of these people, can you believe their acts? Can any one say that the great body of the Catholics, though

eagerly soliciting to be restored to their just rights and privileges as British subjects, have done any act that manifests a decided hostility to the Protestant Church establishments? If they have, it has been without my knowledge.

I know, my lords, that a great many very foolish, angry, and idle speeches have been made at public meetings in reference to this point; and, with all due deference to the noble and learned lord, I hardly ever knew a public meeting yet, at which angry, idle, and foolish speeches were not made. People get warm and angry, especially if they have been abused beforehand; and it is not, perhaps, much to be wondered at that they should, on such occasions, retort upon their adversaries some part of the accusations and acrimony with which they themselves had been liberally assailed. But it is too much to say, because two or three angry priests or demagogue orators have spoken angry, foolish, or intemperate language at public meetings, that the feelings which such speeches imply are in accordance with the feelings, notions and principles of the whole Catholic body. This can be no test of the principles of the Roman Catholics. No body of men on earth will bear that test. But what the Catholics say is this,—that whatever notions may have been thrown out in the speeches of rash and intemperate individuals, they have attempted nothing against the Protestant Church Establishment. That is what the Catholics say; but the argument of their opponents is, that they know the notions and intentions of the Roman Catholics much better than the Roman Catholics themselves. The argument amounts to this: "You swear you have no intention to injure the Protestant Church, but you do not know your own feelings and principles; you cannot be

true to your religion unless you do entertain such an intention as you disclaim, and, therefore, you must entertain it." This is not very wise, to say the least of it. I do not think the right reverend prelate, once Regius Professor of Divinity in the University of Oxford, would lecture in that way. But it has been contended by many of the opponents of concession to the Catholics, that if they are honest and sincere in the belief of the religion which they profess, they must be hostile to the Protestant Establishment. Is it then necessary that any body of honest men, who sincerely believe in their own religion, must be hostile to the establishment of the religion of others? Those who argue in this manner seem to think that an establishment is a principle of religion, but that remains to be proved; I think it is no such thing. An establishment is not a principle of religion, but merely a political institution, which some think has been unwisely connected with religion; but I think differently, and consider the connexion both wise and necessary; and if the thing were to be done again I would say, "Let there be a Church Establishment." But this is a matter of political opinion, beside the present question. I maintain it by no means follows, that because a man is a sincere and honest Roman Catholic, he must necessarily feel disposed to invade the rights of the Protestant Church Establishment.

I cannot take upon myself to say that the Roman Catholic laity are particularly fond of the Protestant Establishment; or that they care so much about it as to prefer it to all others. Abstractly speaking, I do not pretend that the Roman Catholics are much enamoured of the Church Establishment—I rather think they are indifferent upon the subject, and do not care much about it. But an honest Roman Catholic cannot

choose whether there shall be a Protestant Establishment or not. That is not the question which an honest man asks himself. What an honest Catholic says is,—"I find the Protestant Church Establishment a part of the State for these three hundred years—it has imbedded itself in the Constitution, and is so amalgamated with it that it cannot be overturned without overturning the State itself, and all the valuable privileges, rights, properties, and liberties which we enjoy, and which we expect our families and posterity to enjoy under it. The English Church Establishment is intimately connected and bound up with the Established Church of Ireland; and neither the English establishment, nor the State authorities in England and Ireland, will ever permit the Church of Ireland to be injured, or the Protestant ascendancy, in the proper sense of the word, to be destroyed." My lords, I say, sure I am, that if the alternative were put to him, the Roman Catholic would prefer the Protestant Establishment in Church and State, under which security is afforded to his property, his family, and his life, to the wild and bad, and chimerical attempt to uproot the Protestant Establishment, which could only be done by shaking the foundations of the empire. The two countries must be separated before that establishment can be abandoned. It should not be supposed that the Roman Catholics entertain any wishes for the accomplishment of such an object. I am aware I have no right to ask noble lords to give credit to what I state, on account of my personal experience; but I declare most solemnly and deliberately that I believe no intelligent Roman Catholic priest or layman in Ireland ever thought of such a thing, or entertained the most distant wish to attack the Protestant establishment. Roman Catholics being

admitted to be just, virtuous, and excellent characters in a fair proportion to others—never having done anything to invade Protestant interests, swearing that they have no hostile feeling or intention with respect to the Established Church, and having done no act that manifests a hostile feeling to that establishment, or any intention to overturn it,—I do not see why we should force down their throats a doctrine contradicted by the whole tenour of their lives, actions, and professions;—I do not see on what principle of common charity, fairness, or worldly prudence we can do this. What then, my lords? The only sound conclusion we can arrive at is, that it is neither just or expedient, on such pretences, to persevere in the system of excluding the Catholics from the rights and privileges of Protestant subjects. Supposing the Catholics to entertain a wish to uproot the Protestant religion, the next question is, whether they have the power to do so? The opponents of the measure are bound to prove that the Roman Catholics can effectuate this object. Let us see what circumstances must co-operate to enable them to do so. Can the Roman Catholics forget that principle which forms the very corner-stone of the Constitution, as settled at the period of the Revolution —that one branch of the legislature, and that the highest, must remain exclusively Protestant,—bound, some say, by the coronation oath, never to give his consent or sanction to any measure subversive of the Constitution; but however that (the obligation contained in the coronation oath) may be, at least, bound by a sense of sacred duty to cherish and protect the Protestant establishment? Can this be forgotten?—and, that, therefore, the success of any attempt to injure or overthrow that establishment is utterly impossible, seeing we

have this security, that no measure for the subversion of the Church can receive the assent of a Protestant sovereign? My lords, we have the head of the executive Government of the country—without whose appointment no person can exercise executive power or fill an executive office in the State,—unalterably and exclusively Protestant; and therefore, we have the best security that no one will be appointed to office of whose attachment to the Protestant establishment the sovereign is not well satisfied; or, at least, of whose hostility to the established institutions of the country there can be any reasonable ground for apprehension. Thus we have an undoubted security that no person in the executive department of the Government can be influenced by motives unfavourable to our Protestant Constitution.

In your lordships' House, Protestants possess full security for the safety of our establishments; and, with respect to the other House of Parliament, is it to be supposed that the Protestant constituency of England will return representatives hostile to the cause, or that, after passing of this measure, Ireland can send into the House of Commons individuals more favourable to the Roman Catholics, more hostile to the Protestant establishment, than those previously returned by Roman Catholic electors? The majority of both Houses of Parliament must be Protestant; the king must be Protestant; and yet the argument of the opponents of the measure goes on the supposition, that this nefarious and abominable conspiracy against the Protestant establishment will be got up in the face of all these impassable and impregnable barriers. The idea of danger supposes that there is a majority of Roman Catholic peers in this and a majority of Roman Catholic members in the other House of Parliament,—that a

Protestant sovereign himself is to join the other branches of the legislature in subverting the Church,—and then that this incredible, most nefarious, and abominable conspiracy is to be quietly carried on in the face of the Protestant people of this country. I need only refer to the petitions on the table to prove, to the satisfaction of every thinking mind, that if any persons could be mad enough to enter upon such an undertaking, the actors in the abominable conspiracy would be instantly swept from the face of the earth by the general indignation of the country. Are these the apprehensions entertained by the opponents of the measure? What is the entire amount of the dreaded danger? Would any man of ordinary intelligence in the concerns of life make the difference of a day's purchase between an estate to be held for ever, or till the occurrence of such an event? But it is said, these are possibilities—dangers may arise to the Church from these concessions. This species of argument might be very well if we were at liberty to discuss the present question as we would a scholastic problem: but it is an affair of real life, and the subject does not brook delay. Can we shut our eyes to the dangers, not possible and remote, but actual and imminent? What is the present state of the Protestant Church in Ireland? What is the danger that environs it? The danger is one which no human power can effectually cure—it arises from the circumstance of that Establishment resting for support on a very disproportionate minority of the population of the country. It is impossible for the legislature to make Catholics Protestants; your lordships' must deal with the people as you find them. That is the real danger; and does this measure aggravate the danger? No; on the contrary, it lessens the danger, and adds to

its security, by removing that impression of odious and irritating exclusion which has been, in the minds of the Catholic population of Ireland, too much connected with the Protestant establishment.

What the Catholics urge is this:—"Here are we pressing and urging with all our might the restoration of our just rights and privileges as British subjects"—I am now looking at the question in the view which I last took of it, and supposing that the only ground of objection to the measure were an apprehension for the safety of the Protestant establishment—"Here then," say the Catholics, "are we pressing and urging with all our might the restoration of our just rights and privileges as free-born subjects, and these we must not cease to solicit as long as we live, or as long as they are withheld from us; but we have no hostile intention against the Protestant establishment, which is quite a different matter, and if our just claims are satisfied, and our just rights as British subjects conceded to us, the Protestant Church Establishment has no reason to apprehend any danger from us. Consider, they say, that we are perfectly willing to swear that we entertain no hostile feeling to the Protestant establishment, and that we will never attempt anything against it, with a view to its injury and destruction." "No matter," say the opponents of this measure, "as long as the establishment exists, your rights and privileges will never be granted:" and this is, in their opinion, the way in which the Protestant Establishment is to be secured from danger! This is as much as to say, "We know you intend no evil, we believe your oaths, but still you shall not have that which you require." My lords, it is an awful, a fearful proposition; it is one which stands on a fearful alternative; nay, I will say further, that from the great body

of the wealth and intelligence of the Protestants of Ireland, those who would advocate such a course of measures cannot expect any great degree of gratitude or acknowledgment; for, by such a system, they prevent the Protestants of Ireland from being relieved from the distressing condition in which the evils arising from the present state of the country place them. By such a course you prevent capital from flowing into Ireland, and you prevent the people from being well employed, and, therefore, comfortable and satisfied; you prevent the rise of the value of lands, the lowering of the rate of interest, and the kindly feelings that ought in every country to prevail between londlord and tenant, without which no country can be happy and prosperous; and, to crown all, you alienate the feelings and affections of seven millions of your fellow-subjects.

My lords, these are not wild or visionary speculations; they are necessary inferences drawn from the progress of events; and I hope that those who apprehend danger from this measure will turn these things in their minds, and learn where the danger to Church and State really lies, and where the security. I am sorry that the most reverend primate of Ireland (the Archbishop of Armagh) has not been able to bring himself to support the present measure of his Majesty's Ministers. I cannot hope that anything I may say can induce him to alter his opinions or his conduct. But I can bear testimony, as I do, with the most unaffected sincerity, to the manner so highly becoming his elevated station and sacred profession, in which he has declared his adherence to his former opinions. I am quite sure that nothing has contributed more to soften disappointment, when disappointment has been felt, or to assuage exasperation, when exasperation has been excited, than the mild,

dignified, and moderate conduct which the right reverend prelate has displayed on all occasions, when it has become necessary for him to uphold the interests of the Church.

Before I quit this part of the subject, I must notice one point which has been somewhat agitated in Parliament, and very much discussed out of doors, and with respect to which a very great mistake appears to prevail. It is said, that although it is not a principle essential to the zeal and sincerity of religionists in general, that they should be hostile to all who dissent from their opinions, yet, that there is something in the tenets of the Roman Catholics which justifies us in imputing such a feeling to them. My lords, I contend it is most improper to suppose that the Roman Catholics of the present day hold it as a tenet of their religion, that God has destined to eternal damnation every one who does not belong to their Church. But it is said the Roman Catholic religion is unchanged from what it was. Why, so it is, as regards the obligations of its professors. All religions are unchanged as to their professors. But the Roman Catholic of this day, and at this stage of society, is as different from the Catholic of the time of Queen Mary as it is possible for one man to be from another; no two things can be more unlike. Whatever abstract notions may have been propagated in the writings of some of the Roman Catholic churchmen, and whatever may have been the opinions stated by ignorant or intemperate zealots, I do not think that any man of sense and intelligence, from the time Christianity was instituted to the present time, ever seriously held that the all-merciful God had damned to all eternity any person merely on account of the nature of his abstract notions on the subject of religious doctrines. No Catholic

living in society ever avowed such a monstrous doctrine, and it is improper and unjust to impute it to them.

With respect to the point of the coronation oath, I do not, as I before said, think it necessary to dwell on it, as little has been said on it in the course of the debate, and that ground of objection to the admission of Catholics to the privileges of British subjects seems now to be nearly, if not entirely, abandoned. But the noble and learned lord on the cross-bench has expressed a doubt on the subject. It has been argued thus:—"It is true, we have at present our gracious Sovereign, who is a Protestant: but what security have you that such will always be the case? What security have you that a time may not come when you may have on the Throne a person, pretending, indeed, to be a Protestant, but who is in his heart, and in fact, a Papist?" Why, really, my lords, I know of no security which the law affords against that happening, even as matters stand; and I do not, therefore, understand how that danger can be either created or aggravated by the passing of the present measure. I know not what security could be offered against such a contingency, for I do not know of any possible law that can be devised against hypocrisy—unless you will make a law that if any person be a hypocrite he shall *ipso facto* forfeit his title. I should be glad to know what security we have, under the present law; for the King's minister may be, for aught I know, a hypocrite; and if he be of that particular *caste* he will, from a parity of principles, and to suit his own political taste, collect around him a cabinet of hypocrites, and so they may all be hypocrites together. My lords, in dealing with this question we should consider that it is a question of life and action, and we should not take up absurd and extravagant hypotheses.

Thus, those who oppose this measure, ask what would become of the Protestant Establishment in Church and State, if, after passing this measure, all his Majesty's Ministers should be Papists? It is not very likely that all the Ministers should be Papists; but, at the same time, there can be no doubt but that a conscientious Protestant King may think that a Catholic of talent and virtue may be a better public servant than a Protestant who is not distinguished by these qualities. But they may as well say, upon this ground of argument, not only that the King and the Ministers, but that the whole of the two Houses of Parliament, may be Papists and hypocrites, and I know of no law at present in existence that could prevent this catastrophe, if they should all take it into their heads to be hypocrites, and pretend to be Protestants; and then, no doubt, the result of all this will be that we must have the Pope. But, my lords, all this is purely chimerical.

I am distressed at trespassing upon your lordships' attention at this late period; but, after the many challenges that have been thrown out, I cannot sit down without making some observations on the tendency which this measure is, by some, supposed to have to destroy the principles established at the Reformation and the Revolution; and, in approaching this point, I cannot refrain from congratulating your lordships upon the softened tone which the denunciations sent from this House amongst the people have assumed. At the beginning of the session the people of England were addressed in an elevated tone,—they were called upon in urgent and imperative terms to come forward; they were told their religion was attacked, and required their support and defence—that the principles of the Reformation were assailed—and that the time would

come when the hostile designs of their enemies would be made manifest, to the conviction, if not to the satisfaction, of every one. Now, my lords, on this subject I would beg your lordships' attention to what has been said by my noble and learned friend on the woolsack and by my noble friend behind me. Two more able, powerful, and convincing statements I have never heard. My noble friends have examined the laws which bear on the measure, statute by statute, and proved that no real danger can be reasonably apprehended from the passing of this measure; and that the time is come when those penal statutes, which could be justified only by necessity, ought to be repealed, as the necessity no longer exists; for, undoubtedly, privilege and equal rights are the rule and principle—exclusion only the exception, which ought to cease instantly, when the circumstances have ceased to operate, which alone could render it just or expedient. To this the noble and learned lord has been able to produce nothing in answer, except his own individual authority, which certainly, as far as personal authority goes, is of great weight, and entitled to great consideration. The noble and learned lord certainly gave his solemn asseveration that he would die in the belief of the opinions which he has maintained; but I hope it will be long before the noble and learned lord will be called upon to give that proof of his sincerity; and however great the noble and learned lord's personal authority may be, I really wish he would favour us with one or two arguments.

Now, my lords, first, with regard to the Reformation. The noble and learned lord says it was established on the principle of excluding Catholics from Parliament and from office; and that to secure that object the oath of supremacy was required to be taken. My lords, I beg

leave to say that the oath of supremacy was never established for any such purpose at the Reformation. The statute of the 5th of Elizabeth never meant to exclude Roman Catholics from this House: on the contrary, there is a special exemption in their favour. The Queen did not think proper to exact this oath from them, and her Majesty then stated her reason, which had no relation to their religion, and which was, that the Queen was otherwise assured of their loyalty. She was known as a steady and a staunch Protestant, and she therefore felt, when she was dealing with Roman Catholics, that she might rely on her own justice and magnanimity. Therefore, what proof is there that it was intended to exclude the Roman Catholics? The oath of supremacy was administered as a test, not of conformity, but of loyalty. Those who were admitted into the Lower House were bound to be faithful to the Constitution: but it was necessary to ascertain who were loyal and who were not, and therefore the oath of supremacy was put to them. I do the noble and learned lord the justice to believe that he is as sincere and as good a Protestant as any in this House; but he will give me leave to say, that I believe Queen Elizabeth to have been quite as good and as sincere a Protestant as he is. She gave proof of her sincerity,—she hazarded her throne and her life in abiding by her religion; and she was known to her subjects as a staunch and zealous Protestant, and therefore she was at liberty to deal with the Roman Catholics according to the dictates of her own wisdom and her just views of expediency.

My lords, I am stating facts which are so notorious, that I am sure the noble and learned lord will go along with me; for what I state I find in the evidence of the statute books, in public records, and in the pages of the

historians of the day, who relate that it was the policy of Elizabeth to gain over the Catholics, and not to alienate them; not to shut them out of the Constitution, but to coax them into it. With that view she changed the Articles of the Liturgy, which had been framed in the time of Edward VI., and that part of the Communion Service which was obnoxious to the feelings of the Roman Catholics. This she did, for the purpose of enabling the Roman Catholics to join in the service; and she struck out that part which mentions the denial of the real presence, for the purpose of admitting them into communion. These facts are as indisputable as that George II. succeeded George I. The Roman Catholics accordingly did, during the first thirteen years of Elizabeth's reign, take the oath of supremacy, which the noble and learned lord seems to think was impossible; and they did also join in communion, and did not cease to do so until after a combination had been formed by the foreign states against this country. When the Roman Catholics ceased to join in this communion it was from a religious scruple, not on account of their political principles,—it was at the moment, as a noble lord has already mentioned, that Howard of Effingham was fighting under the auspices of an excommunicated queen, against an armament whose banners had been consecrated by the Pope,—against the officer of a powerful Catholic sovereign,—when he was sustaining a Protestant throne against foreign invaders, backed by the bull of the Pope. My lords, if we peruse the pages of history, we shall find that at that time Roman Catholics were eligible to all the offices of the State. It is true, indeed, that towards the latter end of the reigns of Charles I. and Charles II. Roman Catholics became suspected, not on account of their religion, but on

account of their adherence to the designs of the throne. It was the throne that was first disaffected to the liberties of the people. From the time of Charles I. the Roman Catholics came to be considered as the enemies to the State, because they were the adherents of the King; and from the time of Charles II. the King not only made attempts upon the liberties of the subject, but, in addition, became himself a convert to the Roman Catholic religion; and the throne being thus an enemy to the religion of the State, the Roman Catholics became more than ever suspected; and, in point of fact, though not by the operation of law, they were generally excluded from Parliament. Yet they did still, in some instances, continue to get into Parliament and to sit in the House of Commons. There was no pretence to keep them out of the House of Commons; but they were got out at last; and how did the great Protestant leaders of the day manage to get them out of that House? Why, those gentlemen managed to get them out, notwithstanding they took all the oaths that were then required of them, by bringing into operation the Acts against recusancy. There were penalties against recusancy, and among them was one, that any person who had been convicted under those statutes, was not at liberty to come within ten miles of London or Westminster; and the Protestant leaders managed to show that the Catholic members had been guilty of recusancy, produced a record of the recusancy, and then moved for a new writ, and got the seat declared vacant. This was the state of things up to the 30th Charles II., which shows that the oath of supremacy was not fully available to exclude Catholics from Parliament. At that time an Act was passed to prevent the Roman Catholics from sitting in Parliament. I beg to call your lord-

ships' attention to this statute. It was made against Popish recusants, and stated the mischief that would happen if these persons had access to the King; and that statute accordingly contains two enactments: the first, that they shall not sit in Parliament without making the declaration; and the second, that unless they comply with that provision they shall not have access to the King; and thirdly, there is a provision that they shall be banished from within ten miles of London and Westminster. I have been stating that this was the law in its full effect then passed against the Catholics, and I ought only to add, that there was one exception, namely, the Duke of York; with that exception, this was the law of the land. What has become of these laws? They are all gone. All the laws against recusancy are repealed, so that there is one member of these immortal laws gone. The provision that was to prevent the access of Papists to the King has also been repealed; it has shared the same fate with the other, and there is a second member of the immortal laws gone. Well, then, we come to another point, and that is what we seem to consider that we must retain as the only remaining immortal part of our Constitution, the mutilated bust of Titus Oates, probably as a companion to the Protestant statue of the great King William. My lords, when the record of our ancient laws shall be unfurled for the wonder and admiration of posterity, they will then see what portion of them has been of a perishable nature, and what is the essence immortal that survives all decay. So far for the law of Titus Oates, as I must ever call it. I will not say that there was not good reason to enact that law at that time, for Catholics were then dangerous. The proposed remedy, however, was not obtained, which was to guard against the designs of the Crown.

My lords, I now come to another part of this subject. I ask, what is the meaning of saying that these laws were consummated at the Revolution? Is the Act I have alluded to incorporated with the Bill of Rights? I ask, does the Bill of Rights trouble itself with the trumpery of the Popish religion?—with transubstantiation — or with the saints? Certainly not. The great men who framed that Bill were engaged in settling the principles of the Constitution, in determining how far it had been invaded by the Crown, and they had no room in their heads for such articles as these. That declaration asserted the rights and liberties of the subject, so far as they had been invaded by the Crown, and no further. The great men who were then acting for the people have not had, in my opinion, full justice done to their memory in the references that have been made to them;—they were no system-mongers—no grinders of theories—no political dogmatizers; but rational, practical statesmen, who did not endeavour to set up absurd rules, but to see what were the actual grievances of the people, and to redress them. There were thirteen particular matters in which the Crown had violated the rights of the subject, and these matters were all then declared to be the rights and liberties of the subject. There cannot be a stronger proof of this than the manner in which they treated the right of petitioning. The right of petitioning the Crown, not the Parliament, was asserted, and for this reason, that it was only the right of petitioning the Crown that had been invaded in the case of the seven bishops. They then proceeded to the task of repairing the Protestant Constitution, and of declaring what should be unalterable. It is a material point to observe that, laying out of consideration any such abstract principle as that it

was necessary to the existence of a church and state that its religion should be Protestant, they only say, "We find from experience that in this Protestant kingdom it is necessary for the safety of the State that the Crown should be permanently and unalterably Protestant; that if the king turns papist, or marries a papist, he loses his right to the Throne; we therefore enact that it shall be so." Great stress has been laid on the words in the Bill of Rights describing this as a Protestant kingdom. I admit that the words of the Bill of Rights are "this Protestant kingdom." I have been asked repeatedly whether this is not so, and I admit that it is. I know that the declaration says that this kingdom is Protestant, but it does not say that there shall be no papists in it; and, in the same way, I may agree with those persons who, out of doors, make so much noise, that this Parliament must be Protestant, but not exclusively Protestant. It is essentially and predominantly Protestant; and, in that sense, will so remain, until such a body of Catholics are admitted into it as shall make it lose that character.

I will now call your lordships' attention to one or two other Acts. There was an Act passed in the first year of William III., by which the papists were forbidden to carry arms, and that was considered necessary for the Protestant safety. That provision was in substance transferred to the Bill of Rights, which admitted the right of Protestants to carry arms, but said nothing of the papists. In arguing on inferences from the Bill of Rights, that is the only part hostile to the Catholics, and that only passage has been repealed by the Act of 1791, which also repealed the Act forbidding Catholics to have access to the Throne. If there were any danger to be apprehended from the Roman Catholics, it would

surely be greater from their having secret access to the Throne, and being thus enabled secretly to suggest treasonable projects against the Constitution, than from their being allowed to state them openly here in the face of the country, and in the hearing of noble lords, who could put them down by the force, argument, and wisdom of Parliament.

I will now briefly advert to the point noticed by my noble and learned friend on the woolsack, and by the noble duke, in introducing this measure. The point to which I allude is the reference to the 8th chapter of the 1st of William III. I will first state what were the provisions of the law before that time. By the statute of Charles II. no person could accept any commission in the army without taking the oaths and subscribing the declaration against transubstantiation ; but there was nothing in that Act by which he was not permitted to accept the commission, if he afterwards took those oaths. Then came the Act of William III., which said, "That is not a sufficient security, and you must take the oaths previously to accepting the commission." Why, then, the Bill, in respect of which the noble duke has declared himself responsible, is only an Act to repeal the Act of King William, which was itself but a measure rendered necessary at that time for the safety of the subject.

There afterwards was enacted a law, for which the noble and learned lord is a responsible party, and which was considered necessary for the interests of the State, as it was found advisable to restore the law to the condition in which it had been left by the Act of Charles II. The Act of William said that the oaths were not a sufficient security, unless they were taken before the commission was accepted ; but the Act of the noble and learned lord says, it shall be sufficient if they are taken

afterwards. I say, therefore, that the noble and learned lord has taken as great, if not a greater liberty with the Constitution than his Majesty's Ministers are now about to do. I do not say that this was done insidiously, but the fact is that the House went upon the expediency of the measure, not being told of the Act of William (the name of our great deliverer was kept out of the way), but the practice of the army and navy was the only thing referred to. It was only stated that inconveniences were occasioned by the then existing laws, and the alteration was made to get rid of them. I am not here to contend that there was a necessity for previously taking the oath, or to object to those who passed the law of 1817, which, however, I must say, was an utter abandonment of this Act of William, and that, too, without providing any other oath in its stead. That has not been the case with the present Bill, in which an oath is introduced that incorporates everything in the oaths of supremacy and allegiance, even after the oath required by the Act of King William has, with respect to the army, been so long done away.

I will now say a word or two with respect to the Union with Scotland, in relation to which there is an extract from the *Lords' Journal* of the 3rd of February, 1706, so important, that I must beg leave to read it, though at the hazard of wearying your patience. It is important as showing the opinion, at the time of the union with Scotland, of the men who framed the Bill of Rights:—"On the Bill for securing the rights of the Church of England, a motion was made that it be a special instruction to the committee of the whole House, to whom the Bill for securing the rights of the Established Church has been referred, that there be inserted in the same Bill, as a fundamental condition of the said union,

that the laws then existing against the Catholics should be declared perpetual and unalterable, and it was resolved in the negative." I have other documents to the same effect, but I will not abuse your patience by citing them. I will reserve them for another opportunity.

Then comes the Act of Union with Scotland, in which the negotiators of that union inserted two things, as fundamental and essential conditions of the Act, and the object of both of these was the security of the English and Scotch Churches in the form in which they were established. These two articles were declared to be fundamental parts of the Union, and to be permanent and unalterable. The Act by which the election of sixteen representative peers and forty-five commoners was to be regulated was framed in the same way as the others, with a view to the preservation of the English and Scotch Churches, but when the laws relating to the Catholics were referred to in that Act it only said that those laws were to continue "until the Parliament of Great Britain shall otherwise determine." That is, Catholics were to be excluded from Parliament only until the Parliament should determine that they ought to be admitted. Your lordships are, therefore, in passing this Bill, only exercising the power specially reserved to you by that Act of Union, and your justification will rest as well on its authority as on the example of that great lawyer, Lord Hardwicke. I will now only allude to one point more. It is said by the opponents of this measure that if they were satisfied it would, on being carried, secure the tranquillity of Ireland, they would not resist it any longer, but would be disposed to acquiesce in it. For myself, I doubt not that it will secure the tranquillity of Ireland, and I think it cannot fail in doing so. A noble earl who spoke last night with distinguished

ability upon this point, does not seem to me to have put the question on such high grounds as those on which it is fairly entitled to rest, and which his excellent understanding might have taught him to adopt. He stated that he did not think this measure would produce tranquillity in Ireland, and he gave his reasons for that opinion. I differ from the conclusion to which he arrived; I think it will produce tranquillity there. What are the reasons for supposing it will? The first question is, ought it to produce tranquillity? If you are satisfied that it is a measure of public justice, and that it ought to satisfy the people, you may take it for granted that it will do so. Do not act upon the inference that because the Catholic has not been satisfied with measures short of justice, he will not be satisfied when the full measure of justice is accorded to him. I will add that nothing short of it will produce that effect. As to the security of the measure, let me tell noble lords that, after this Bill is passed, if the Roman Catholics do anything with which a reasonable man would not be satisfied every Protestant in Ireland will be arrayed against them,—every Protestant in England will join to punish them; their property will be taken away, and Government will no longer have to act with a divided body, either here or in any other part of the empire. At present you have the whole body of the Catholics against you. Pass this measure, and you will no longer have in opposition to you the Catholics of Ireland and a large body of the Protestants of the whole empire. I go along with my noble friend in supposing that tranquillity will be produced by this measure, but if the Catholics are still dissatisfied, Ministers will come down to Parliament with the conviction that they are strong, because they have been honest, and if what they require is necessary, Parliament will

not hesitate to grant it. I believe that Ireland will thank you for this. Among so large a body as the Catholics of Ireland, there may be some momentary ebullition of joy, but I am convinced their feelings of party triumph will soon subside, and that the people will become satisfied and grateful for what they have obtained, and the same thing will occur with respect to the Protestants of Ireland. Great allowances must be made for them. They have, it is true, formed Brunswick clubs; these clubs will cease to be necessary.

The Protestants have been drawn into violence and intemperance, by the proceedings of the opposite side. They have done what the Roman Catholics did when they collected together,—they became seditious and licentious. They associate for the purpose of self-defence, and they have stepped beyond the proper bounds; but they have done so under circumstances that afford a strong palliation for their conduct. I can say, from actual knowledge, that there is not in England or in the civilized world a more respectable, industrious, and temperate body than the Protestants of Ireland. I allude particularly to the Protestants of the North of Ireland, of whom I can speak from actual experience. I am sure, that when they come to know the real nature of the question, and find themselves deprived of what they have long possessed,—a nominal superiority, from which, however, they have incurred much embarrassment, but have derived no real advantage,—they will be rejoiced that such a burden has been taken away, and they will feel grateful at their fellow-subjects having been placed upon a footing of national equality. I know that some of those who have been most anxious to oppose this measure will, when it shall have passed, be among the first to thank you for the beneficial effects that must flow from it.

After a few unimportant observations from other peers, the Duke of Wellington made a short formal reply on behalf of the Government, and the Bill was read a second time by a majority of 104. On the 10th it passed its third reading, and three days later received the royal assent.

No alterations were made in the measure as it passed through committee, but its enactment was followed by the passing of two other Bills, one to abolish the franchise of the forty-shilling freeholders, the other to suppress the Jesuits. These auxiliary Acts were most unpopular in Ireland; and when it was found that by the insertion of the single word "hereafter" in the emancipation clauses of the central measure, O'Connell was for the moment prevented from taking his seat, and the great Clare election, which had really insured the triumph of the cause, was nullified, a strong but just feeling of indignation was excited in Ireland. It seemed hard that the measure of justice so long delayed, and ultimately extorted by force, should have, even at the very last, been conceded reluctantly, ungraciously, and in a spirit of malice and contumely.

Nevertheless, it had the immediate effect of preventing a civil war, and perhaps of averting a foreign invasion. Before the Cabinet yielded it might be said that anarchy had been organized

throughout Ireland, and that peace had been forced into an unnatural combination with war. But with the passing of Emancipation these dangers disappeared. For a time at least peace and harmony returned to this unhappy country, and the traces of the storm that threatened to convulse society to its depths were only to be observed in gentle swells, that here and there undulated beneath its placid surface.*

* A curious but well-authenticated coincidence, which at the time struck with a superstitious awe both Protestants and Catholics, is recorded by an excellent modern historian, and is certainly still believed by persons living on the spot. A lofty column, on the walls of Derry, bore the effigy of Bishop Walker, who fell in the battle of the Boyne; the figure was armed with a sword, typical of his martial inclinations rather than of his religious calling. Many years had this sword, sacred to liberty, or Protestant ascendancy, according to the eyes with which the spectator regarded it, turned its steadfast point to the broad estuary of Loch Foyle. Neither wintry storms nor summer heats had loosened it in grasp of the warlike churchman, until on the 13th day of April, 1829—the day on which the King signed the Act of Emancipation, the bishop's sword fell with a crash on the ramparts of Derry.—*Popular History of Ireland, by* THOMAS MAGEE, vol. ii. p. 803.

CHAPTER VII.

SPEECHES IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS—GREAT POLITICAL INFLUENCE —STRICT ATTENTION TO JUDICIAL DUTIES—LAWYER-LIKE QUALITIES—RESIGNATION OF THE GREAT SEAL—SERJEANT GREENE'S ADDRESS—FAREWELL ADDRESS TO THE BAR.

WHEN the Emancipation Bill passed into law, the great object of Plunket's political career was obtained. From that memorable day, upon which the struggling young Irish barrister "had prevailed over the prejudice" of good old Lord Charlemont, until the day when, in his place beside the Duke of Wellington, he prevailed over the prejudices of the peers of England, he had been the friend of his Roman Catholic countrymen; he had never lost sight of their interests or relaxed his exertions in their favour. In office and out of office, in Ireland and in England, he had fought their battle; and when at last the colours of their enemies were struck, this great parliamentary champion seems to have rested upon his sword, thinking the task of his life accomplished.

Until his busy employments as Chancellor made protracted absence from Ireland impossible, he often attended in the House of Lords, and he adapted his style of speaking to the taste of that critical assembly, as he had suited it to the various habits of the English and Irish Commoners. But none of the subjects that afterwards occupied his attention were at all so much his own, so completely identified with his lifelong habits of thought, as had been the Catholic question, and he was seldom moved to any great exertion; he had in fact gained his suit, but lost his peculiar occupation in Parliament. Nevertheless, the student will find in the regular reports—insufficient as they are—of his speeches in the Reform Bill debates on the 28th of March and the 6th of October, 1831, much that is in his best style, and in the latter particularly a noble constitutional commentary on the progress of our representative institutions. Again on the 27th of February, 1832, on the question of Irish tithes, he was found as useful to his friends and as formidable to his enemies as he had ever been; and on the 19th of March, 1833, he strongly advocated the system of national education then proposed to be established in Ireland, in an oration, luminous and suitable to the noble principles of concilia-

tion embodied in that measure; while one of the best examples of his powers of invective may be found in his reply to Lord Longford on the 26th of February, 1829, the conclusion of which is a very perfect specimen of polished irony.

I shall not, however, print any of these, for his speech on the Catholic question, given in the preceding chapter, is probably as good a specimen of his manner in the House of Lords as I could have selected; and in order to introduce others it would be necessary to enter upon the consideration of important political questions, whose treatment does not fall within the scope of this work.

On the 30th of January, 1830, Lord Plunket was appointed Chancellor of Ireland, and received the congratulations of his old political chief, then in his eighty-second year.

Lord Grenville to Lord Plunket.

MY DEAR LORD, *Dropmore, January* 29, 1831.

I did not trouble you with any letter on your appointment to your present high station (in which you ought so long since to have been placed), confidently believing that without my doing so you would do full justice to my sentiments on that occasion.

The state of Ireland causes much alarm here, but I see with pleasure that the Government, here and with

you, are decided to act as a Government should act in such case; and not to sacrifice their duty to newspaper clamour, which seems making such rapid strides to universal despotism in Europe.

Ever most faithfully yours,
GRENVILLE.

After his appointment as Chancellor of Ireland, Lord Plunket's political services were confined almost entirely within the sphere of the local Irish executive. A frequent attendance in Parliament would have been under any circumstances incompatible with his regular performance of his judicial and administrative duties, and he had not the personal vanity of wishing unnecessarily to keep himself before the public. He, of course, attended in his place in the House of Lords whenever his advocacy was required by his party, but he had never any fancy for the excitement of political society in London; and even the distinguished and gratifying hospitality with which Lord Holland and Lord Melbourne tempted him, could not wean his affections from his favourite haunt at Old Connaught.

But though his name was less often before the English public, his influence in the Government of Ireland had never been greater—not even in the days of the "Bottle Riot" and the "Association"—than it was during the viceroyalties of

Lords Anglesea, Wellesley, and Mulgrave, which represent nearly the whole decade from 1830 to 1840.

I shall not enter upon any discussion of that dreariest era of the sad history of Ireland; in reviewing the administrations with which at this time Lord Plunket was successively connected, it would be easy to point out their many errors, but it is impossible to overrate the difficulties of their position. In such a retrospect we should see the courage, and the honesty, and the disinterestedness of Anglesea; and the genius, and integrity, and patriotism of Stanley, the dignified justice of Wellesley, and the popularity of Normanby, neutralized and checkmated at every move by the violence of contending factions,—their ingratitude, and blindness to their interests. We should have to follow the melancholy decline of O'Connell's greatness, and watch him degraded from being the Herculean liberator of his oppressed countrymen, to become the unprincipled panderer to their passions, lashing into fury the revolutionary elements he before had controlled, irritating into unnatural excitement the energies he had formerly used only for holy purposes.

Through all this period of difficulty and danger to the State, the illustrious noblemen who successively undertook the thankless task of governing

this country constantly relied upon the wisdom, energy, and stored experience of the Chancellor; and through the few political letters that remain from this era of his life may be traced the same desire to hold the scales of justice evenly between all parties, to conciliate all honest and moderate men, and to crush with uncompromising severity every opposition to the law, coming from what ever quarter; to curb, on the one hand, Orange bigotry, and on the other priestly arrogance, while he utterly denounced the fanatic folly of one extreme, the ingratitude, and as he certainly considered it, the faithlessness, of the other.

From the office of narrating the wearisome details of these last ten years of Lord Plunket's political life I gladly excuse myself, but I cannot close these volumes without attempting to sketch him in his purely judicial character.

It might, perhaps, have been expected that his age, his political habits long confirmed, his constant intimacy with great affairs of State, would have rendered him inattentive and careless in the discharge of his judicial functions, and impatient of the stale and unprofitable squabbles with which his time was sometimes occupied. But such was not the fact; there he sat, day after day, with calm dignity and sedulous care, disposing of all kinds of business, and applying the masculine

vigour of his mind to every detail of the smallest case, occasionally breaking his habitual silence with some short epigrammatic sentence, expressing in a few words the meaning which it cost others hours of laboured argument to convey, and reminding the able lawyers who practised before him of the intellectual supremacy which they were all proud to acknowledge. Courteous and forbearing to all, he was especially ready to encourage the efforts of any young aspirant in whom he recognized talent and industry.

If it be asked, what was the peculiar quality which distinguished his "judicial mind," and which appears most prominently in his recorded judgments? it may be said that he was remarkable for the boldness with which he grappled difficult problems, the rapidity with which he arrived at a conclusion, and the decision with which he afterwards adhered to it. Indeed, in the few instances in which his judgments were questioned or overruled, his error consisted always in a departure from narrow authorities, and a disposition to use too freely his privileges as an equity judge, in straining the law to the actual requirements of justice in particular cases.

It was his fortune, as Chancellor of Ireland, once to succeed in that office, and twice to be succeeded in it, by one of the most eminent English

jurists of modern times—Lord St. Leonards (then Sir Edward Sugden); and their judicial and lawyerlike qualities were often contrasted and compared * by the men whose advocacy then

* Cases in which such great lawyers were led to draw opposite legal conclusions from the same state of facts cannot fail to be interesting to the professional reader. I shall therefore draw his attention to a few, which seem to me to be the most curious of such instances. Lord Brougham has in the preface to these volumes referred to two of these. In *Stokes* v. *Heron*, certain annuities had been left by will, and the question was, whether effect should be given to the uncertain language of the testator, so as to limit these annuities for life or in perpetuity. The reasons given in Lord Plunket's judgment (which, having been reversed by Sir Edward Sugden, was restored by the House of Lords) raised at once the important question, whether the principle of construction known as "the rule in Wilde's case" is applicable to personal property? (*Stokes* v. *Heron*; 1, *Connor and Lawson*, 270; 2, *Drury and Warren*, 89; 12, *Clarke and Finelli*, 161). *Creed* v. *Creed* (also referred to by Lord Brougham) turns on the distinction between an annuity charged by a testator upon a specific real estate and his general legacies directed to be raised out of the same real estate, in case of the personalty proving insufficient for the purpose. The argument had before Lord Plunket in this case, and the reasons upon which he grounded his judgment, have not been anywhere satisfactorily reported, but Lord Chancellor Sugden's views, and the case as re-argued in the House of Lords (where the decision of Lord Plunket was upheld), will be found duly recorded. (*Creed* v. *Creed*; 1, *Drury and Warren*, 416; 4th *Ir. Equity*; 11, *Clarke and Finelli*, 491.) Another case, with reference to which the opinions of Lord Plunket and Sir Edward Sugden seem to have been opposed, though never judicially confronted, is that of *Brownlow* v. *Earl of Meath*. The history of this case, and of the important questions decided in it, will be found in *Sugden on Powers* (p. 629, *et seq.*, 8th edition). When the Irish Chancellor came to decide upon the questions raised in this case, Sir Edward Sugden had already written learnedly upon it, and had urged conclusions the opposite of those which Lord Plunket adopted, but the decision of the latter has never since been shaken, and has been followed in case after case, both in England and in Ireland. It is worth while to observe that although, as Lord St. Leonards says, Lord Plunket did not *in his judgment* examine the case of *Pitt* v. *Jackson*, it would be a mistake to suppose that this authority had not been brought under the Chancellor's notice. It was dealt with at length in the argument, and will be found constantly quoted in the report of the case, 2, *Drury and Walshe*, p. 674, from which it also appears that Sir Edward Sugden's

adorned the Irish Court of Chancery; but opinions were nearly evenly divided in adjudging the preference to one or the other. It is now peculiarly difficult to form an adequate estimate of Lord Plunket's abilities as an Equity Judge, for his old aversion to the manual labour of writing followed him to the Bench, and he never wrote out a judgment in any case where it was possible to avoid doing so. The reports of his decisions which have come down to us will be found in the early numbers of the *Irish Law Recorder—New Series*, in the Reports of *Loyd and Goold*, and of *Drury and Walshe*, and in the first, second, and third volumes of the *Irish Equity Reports*.

comments upon the subject were strongly pressed by the petitioner's counsel, and I think are referred to by Lord Plunket when he speaks of adverse "criticism" (pp. 698, 699). It will not, I am sure, be supposed that in these observations, I mean in the smallest degree to derogate from the fame of the great jurist, to whose masterly work I have referred. Indeed no one was ever more deeply impressed with a sense of the merits of Lord St. Leonards than was the subject of these memoirs. I must add that, of all the cases—and they were not many—in which the judgments of Sir Edward Sugden clashed with those of Lord Plunket, the opinion of the former was quite as often sustained in the court of last appeal as that of the latter. A remarkable instance of such results from the differences of the two Chancellors may be found in *Muskerry* v. *Sheehey*. It passed through many vicissitudes of varying judicial opinions, but at last the judgment of Sir Edward Sugden was affirmed in opposition to that of Lord Plunket, though the views of the latter were supported by a certificate from the Irish Court of Common Pleas. (See *Loyd* and *Goold, temp. Sugden*, p. 185; *ib. temp. Plunket*, 182; *ib.* 568.) And again, in the still more remarkable and interesting suit, known as *In re Walker* (*Loyd and Goold, temp. Plunket*, 136; *ib.* 533), a difference between these learned lords ended similarly. Lord Plunket's legal error in this last case is an instance of the way in which his fearless spirit led him sometimes to push a principle far, or even to break through a slight *cordon* of adverse decisions, in order to get at a result practically desirable.

It is now my painful duty to refer to the circumstances under which Lord Plunket resigned the Great Seal of Ireland. Lord Brougham has, in a spirit of generous friendship, recorded his opinion of that transaction. To his indignant censure it is not for me to add a word. I shall merely publish the correspondence which passed at the time between the persons principally concerned, and which fully explains the true position of all the parties.

I must, however, preface these letters by saying, that when the rumour was first circulated in Dublin in 1839, that it was intended to supersede Lord Plunket as Chancellor, in order to make room for Sir John Campbell, the story was not credited, as it was believed that Lord Plunket, quite apart from personal motives, would not submit to such an insult to the profession in Ireland. He did, in fact, refuse to lend himself to the arrangement, and the Government, having obtained a short renewal of their lease of power, the rumour was for a time forgotten. But one day in June, 1841, Mr. Connellan, the Chancellor's secretary, came into the hall of the Four Courts, and announced that Lord Plunket was about to retire from the Bench, in order to make room for the English Attorney-General, but that his lordship wished it to be understood that he was not in any way responsible for the change.

I have only to add, that Lord Plunket felt that the peculiar circumstances under which the request had been made that he should resign, rendered it impossible for him to refuse to do so, and were also of such a kind as to close his lips to any public reproaches, and that it was not in his nature to indulge private and unavailing complaints. After retiring from the Bench he never again mentioned the subject, nor would he allow it to be referred to in his presence.

[*Private.*]

The Lord Lieutenant to Lord Plunket.

MY DEAR LORD, *Exeter, October* 15, 1839.

We have acted together with such perfect confidence and unreserve in all our communications since I have been in Ireland, that I feel assured you will not misunderstand the motives and feelings with which I now address you; and I know not how I can better convey them than by sending you the subjoined extract of a letter which I have just received from Lord Melbourne:

"I now write on the subject of Lord Plunket. We hear from various quarters that he would not be unwilling to retire, but nothing from himself, nor which can be implicitly relied on. I should be very unwilling to propose to him anything which could hurt his feelings or be inconsistent with his own objects and wishes. But it would be convenient to us if we could now get the Irish Seals for the Attorney-General. Do you know anything of Lord Plunket's wishes, or do you

know any means of sounding him without giving him uneasiness?"

From the tenour of the above you will see that it was not intended for your perusal. But it expresses so kindly the sentiments of the writer towards you (which are entirely in unison with my own) that I do not conceive I can be guilty of any indiscretion in sending it to you, and in begging you frankly and fairly to tell me what you feel on the subject. The report of your retirement and of Sir J. Campbell succeeding you, has, I find, got into some of the newspapers, and I have been asked by one or two friends whether it is true; but I shall of course say not a word to give it countenance till after I hear from you.

My direction for the next ten or twelve days will be Castle Hill, South Walton.

Believe me, with true regard,

My dear Lord, very faithfully yours,

EBRINGTON.

Lord Plunket to the Lord Lieutenant.

MY DEAR LORD, *October* 18, 1839.

I received your letter of the 15th, last night, too late to answer it by return of the post. At my time of life the wish to retire would be a very natural one, but I never expressed such a wish to any person, nor, at the present juncture, should I have thought it becoming, either with respect to myself or to the Government from whom I have received so many marks of regard and confidence, to intimate a desire or intention to withdraw myself from the discharge of public duty, either here or in Parliament. At the same time it is quite clear that after the communication of Lord Melbourne's wishes on the subject, I cannot continue in office, but it is merely

for that reason that I come to such a conclusion. I have to request, therefore, that you will be so good to communicate to him my readiness to comply with the wishes of the Government, and with an assurance that I am very sensible of the kind manner in which he has expressed himself with respect to me; and that my retirement shall not, in the slightest degree, interfere with my cordial support of the Queen's Government, and of the principles on which it is founded. And now, my dear lord, in conclusion, let me express to you my grateful sense of the uniform kindness and confidence with which you have honoured me; and most particularly for the very important obligation conferred on my son and myself in his appointment to the bishopric.

I am always,
With sincere respect and regard,
Your Excellency's faithful servant,
PLUNKET.

Lord Melbourne to Lord Plunket.

Windsor Castle, October 25, 1839.

MY DEAR LORD PLUNKET,

Lord Ebrington has transmitted to me your letter in reply to one which he addressed to you in consequence of a communication which he had received from me. It is impossible for me to express the deep concern which I now feel, that this subject has ever been mentioned to you. Lord Ebrington wrote, as I doubt not that you are persuaded, with the best and kindest intentions towards both you and me, but all that I had asked him was, whether he had any reason to believe that the reports which reached me from many quarters, that you were desirous of retiring, had any foundation. Such reports

I know ought never to be trusted to, and what has now taken place is another proof how unsafe it is to rely upon them—I can only assure you that I greatly rejoice that they are groundless, that I most highly estimate the truly manly, honourable, and patriotic motives by which you are actuated, that I should have considered your retirement at the present moment highly disadvantageous both in point of character and strength to the Government; and for all these reasons I must earnestly entreat you to think of what has passed no more than if it never had taken place.

Believe me, my dear Lord,
Yours ever most truly and faithfully,
MELBOURNE.

Lord Plunket to Lord Melbourne.

MY DEAR LORD, *Bray, October* 28, 1839.

I have just received your letter of the 25th. I assure you that the entire of the circumstances to which you allude shall be altogether dismissed from my recollection; but that the very kind and gratifying expressions which they have led you to use in it relating to me shall always be cordially retained in it.

I am, with sincerity, very truthfully
Your lordship's servant,
PLUNKET.

[*Private.*]

Lord Melbourne to Lord Plunket.

Downing Street, June 6, 1841.

MY DEAR LORD PLUNKET.

The great friendship which you have ever felt and shown personally to myself, and the disinterested

anxiety to serve your political friends and to advance your political principles, by which your conduct has been invariably marked, make me not only hope, but feel confident that you will receive with indulgence the matter which I am now about to open to you. You see the struggle in which we are engaged, and you are aware that many ministerial arrangements must be necessary upon the occasion of the approaching dissolution of Parliament. Amongst these it would be most convenient, and we are most anxious, to provide for the Attorney-General, which the present state of the courts of law does not allow us to do in this country. Under these circumstances I have thought it not impossible that you might be willing to seek that retirement and repose to which your long, able and most distinguished services so well entitle you. I have thought it best, I have thought it the most direct and open course, to state to you at once the object we have in view and the reasons why we ask it. If it is repugnant to your feelings say so at once, and there is an end of the matter. If you accede you will add to the gratitude, which we already owe you for the support and assistance which you have rendered us.

Whatever may be your determination, you will keep the matter entirely secret for the present, and

Believe me, my dear Lord,

With the most earnest wishes for your health and happiness,

Yours ever faithfully,

MELBOURNE.

[*Private.*]

Lord Plunket to Lord Melbourne.

MY DEAR LORD. *June 7th*, 1841.

I have this moment received your note of the 6th. You do not overrate my sentiments, as well personally to yourself, as politically to the friends with whom I have so long and so cordially acted. I am not insensible to the embarrassments you are exposed to, with respect to those who may be affected by the approaching crisis. I have many and insuperable objections, utterly unconnected with any thing personal to myself, to prevent my being a moving party to such an arrangement as you suggest; but as you candidly tell me to say at once whether such an arrangement would be repugnant to my feelings, I think it the most straightforward course to say that it would be so. I am confident that you will not misinterpret the motives which induce me to give this answer.

I shall observe strict secrecy on the subject, even to Lord Ebrington.

I am always, my dear Lord, most sincerely

Your faithful servant,

PLUNKET.

On the 13th of June Lord Plunket had an interview with Lord Ebrington, and then explained to him the reasons which made him unwilling to resign. On the 17th, the latter wrote to him asking him to comply with his request as a personal favour to himself (Lord Ebrington).

[*Private.*]

MY DEAR LORD, *Phœnix Park, June* 17, 1841.

Although, after my communication with you on Monday, I am sensible that, considering what was expressed in Lord Melbourne's letter, I have no right to press you further on the subject of his request to you, yet I feel so strongly the difficulty in which both he and the Government will be placed by your refusal, that I should not do my duty towards them or myself if I did not endeavour to induce you to recall it, and if, while I fully admit the latitude held out to you by Lord Melbourne, I do not urge upon you, so far as you will allow me to do so, as a personal favour to myself, your compliance with his desire. Let me add, that in so doing, I am quite ready to take upon myself the whole responsibility of the arrangement which your resignation is intended to promote, and to make you no otherwise a party to it than in having complied with the request of your friends in the Cabinet, and of myself in particular, by placing your office at their disposal for the purpose of facilitating their ministerial arrangements.

I am with great truth, my dear Lord,

Very faithfully yours,

EBRINGTON.

I shall be at home to-day till three if you should wish to see me.

[*Private.*]

MY DEAR LORD, *Phœnix Park, June* 18, 1841.

I think it may not be unsatisfactory to you to have a copy of the short note in which, by the early post of yesterday, I communicated your resignation to Lord Melbourne.

I am glad also to take this opportunity of repeating to you with my pen the deep and grateful sense which I entertain of your personal kindness to myself, as well as of the service which you have rendered to Lord Melbourne and his Government by the sacrifice which you have made of your own views and opinions to our wishes on this occasion.

Believe me always with the truest regard,

My dear Lord, very faithfully yours,

EBRINGTON.

(*Copy*)

[*Private*]

Phœnix Park, June 17, 1841.

MY DEAR MELBOURNE.

I this morning sent the enclosed to the Chancellor, who has just been with me, and in the handsomest manner, stated that upon the grounds on which I put it he could not hesitate to comply, and that in thus tendering to me his resignation he had only an anxious hope that he might be relieved as soon as possible from the duties of his office. I send by the early post.

Yours truly,

(Signed) EBRINGTON.

He said he supposed the matter need no longer be kept secret; to which I said, Certainly not.

Lord Plunket to the Lord Lieutenant.

MY DEAR LORD. *Friday Evening*, 17 *June.*

I have this moment received your note of this evening.

I think it right to send you a memorandum which I wrote in court immediately on the receipt of your note of Monday, and which I believe is substantially the

account of the communication which I made when I had the honour of seeing you at the Park, and which I had intended to have left with you.

I am very glad that you have informed Lord Melbourne that you had assented to my supposition that the matter was no longer to be considered as a secret; and I have availed myself of it by relieving myself from the possibility of its being considered by the profession or by the public that I have in any degree concurred in the opinions which have been acted upon on this occasion, but that on the contrary I sacrificed my own views and feelings solely from the impossibility I was under of refusing to comply with the personal application of your Excellency, to whom I owe such weighty obligations.

I am always, my dear Lord,
Your faithful servant,
PLUNKET.

Memorandum referred to in the above :—

June 17, 2 *o'clock.*

When called on by Lord Ebrington as a personal favour to himself to resign my office for the purpose of appointing Sir John Campbell to succeed to it, I feel it impossible for me, under the weight of the obligations which I and my family have received from Lord Ebrington, to refuse compliance, even were the proposal made still more objectionable on public grounds, and more repugnant to my feelings, than stated by me in my answer to Lord Melbourne. It therefore remains for me to request that I may be as soon as possible relieved from the discharge of duties which, under the present circumstances, become very irksome to me.

[*Private.*]

The Lord Lieutenant to Lord Plunket.

MY DEAR LORD, *Phœnix Park, June* 19, 1841.

I have just received your lordship's letter, with the minute inclosed in it, which contains very accurately the substance of what you expressed to me in our interview on Wednesday last.

I am always, my dear Lord,
Yours very faithfully,
EBRINGTON.

MY DEAR LORD, *Phœnix Park, June*, 21, 1841.

Lord Melbourne has laid your lordship's resignation before the Queen, who has been graciously pleased to accept it; and I am desired by Lord Melbourne to express to you his thanks for your compliance with his wishes on this occasion.

I am, my dear Lord,
Faithfully and obediently yours,
EBRINGTON.

Lord Campbell to Lord Plunket.

DEAR LORD PLUNKET, *New Street, June* 26, 1841.

I hope I need not say that I am exceedingly distressed to learn that you have expressed dissatisfaction with the circumstances attending your resignation of the Great Seal of Ireland.

I can solemnly declare that when it was proposed to me to be your successor, I believed you were desirous to be relieved from the fatigues of office, and that no opposition would be offered to my appointment.

What has happened cannot be recalled; and nothing remains except that I should repair to the scene of my

new duties, and perform them to the best of my ability.

I think it respectful and proper to announce to you that, according to the wishes of the Lord Lieutenant, I intend to be in Dublin on Monday next. I shall always remember with gratitude the kind terms in which you mentioned me personally in your parting address to the Bar; and I shall ever be eager to testify my respect for you as one of the greatest lawyers, orators, and statesmen who have adorned our country.

I remain, dear Lord Plunket,

Yours very faithfully,

CAMPBELL.

Lord Plunket to Lord Campbell.

DEAR LORD CAMPBELL, *June* 27, 1841.

I have just received your obliging letter of the 26th.

I should not at all advert to the circumstances connected with my resignation of the Great Seal of Ireland, were it not that you express your concern at learning that I had expressed dissatisfaction with them. On the 6th of this month I received a letter from Lord Melbourne, in which, after stating the wishes of Government with respect to yourself, and the reasons for it, he added "that it was the most direct course to go at once to the object, and if it was repugnant to my feelings, to say so at once; and there was an end of the matter." I immediately answered his letter by saying, that "I had many and insuperable objections, utterly unconnected with anything personal to myself, to prevent my being a moving party to such an arrangement; but as he had candidly told me to say at once whether such an arrangement would be repugnant to my feelings, I thought it the

most straightforward course to say at once that it would be so." What these objections were it would now be useless and improper to state, further than to assure you that there was not anything in them inconsistent with the high respect I have always entertained for yourself as a public man, as a highly distinguished professional man, and as a gentleman. I heard nothing more on the subject for some time; but on the 13th of June I received a letter from Lord Ebrington, in which, as a personal favour to himself, he urged my compliance with Lord Melbourne's desire, and added that he was ready to take on himself the whole responsibility of the arrangement, and to make me no otherwise a party to it than in having complied with the request of himself and of my friends in the Cabinet, by placing my office at their disposal. To this I felt that I had only one reply to make, "that I felt myself bound to sacrifice my own views and feelings solely from the impossibility I was under of refusing to comply with such an application from one to whom I owed such weighty obligations for important favours conferred by him on myself and on my son." Having ascertained from his Excellency his acquiescence in my supposition that the matter was no longer to be kept secret, I thought myself bound, when addressed by the Bar on the day of my last appearance in court, to assure them that I had not in any degree concurred in the opinions which had been acted on on this occasion; and that I had been actuated solely by my deep sense of gratitude to his Excellency. Further than this, which I felt due to them and to myself, I am not aware that I have expressed any dissatisfaction on the subject.

I beg to repeat my sentiments of personal respect for yourself, and to express my confident expectations that you will find in the learning and talents and courtesy of

the accomplished Bar of the Court of Chancery, the most effectual and cheerful assistance for the discharge of the duties which now devolve on you.

I remain, dear Lord Campbell,
Yours very faithfully,
PLUNKET.

But one more event of Lord Plunket's public life remains to be told—the saddest but perhaps the proudest of his varied experiences. On the last occasion of his appearing in the Court of Chancery, in which for more than forty years he had pleaded, and for ten years had sat as judge, every portion of its space was crowded by barristers of all ranks and creeds, who came to give him a farewell, full of affection and respect, and worthy of him and of them. It is easy to imagine with what force the many associations of the scene rushed upon his mind, with what bitterness he must have felt the indignity with which his departure from that scene was connected; but all the while he went through his usual duties with a calm dignity, which never forsook him on the Bench. At the conclusion of the business of the day, Serjeant Greene, as the senior member of the Bar then present, addressed him thus :—

I presume, my Lord, it is not your lordship's intention to sit again in this court; I therefore rise, as the senior in rank of the members of the Bar now present, and with the full concurrence of my brethren [here all the

members of the Bar rose simultaneously], to address to your lordship a few words before your retirement from that bench which your lordship has for many years occupied.

Lord Plunket rose from his seat, and advanced to the front of the Bench.

My lord, we are anxious to express to your lordship the sense we entertain, not only of the ability, the learning, the patience, the assiduity which have marked your lordship's administration of the high and important functions committed to your lordship's charge, but also, my lord, of the courtesy, kindness, and attention which we have all personally experienced at your lordship's hands, in the discharge of our professional duties in this Court. We gratefully acknowledge, my lord, the disposition you have ever shown to accommodate us all—a disposition by which we all admit your lordship was ever actuated, without regard to personal circumstances or to our political feelings. We trust, my lord, it will be known that this feeling on our part is as general and as universal as the kindness on your part has been uniform and uninterrupted. My lord, it is needless for us to dwell here, for the purpose of commenting upon the talents and endowments which have raised your lordship to the high position from which you are about to retire. They are, my lord, recorded in our history, and they will long live among the proudest recollections of our countrymen. From a sense of these, we offer to you our present tribute of the profoundest admiration and respect; and, my lord, it is gratifying for us to add, that at no period of your lordship's career have they ever shone in greater lustre than at this moment. My lord,

with warmest wishes for your lordship's happiness in that retirement, which none is more fitted than your lordship to adorn, we respectfully bid your lordship farewell.

When the Bar had concluded their address the Attorneys presented theirs, at the close of which Lord Plunket said,—

It would be great affectation on my part if I were to say that I do not feel to a considerable degree at the prospect of retiring from a profession, at which I have for a period of more than fifty years of my life been actively engaged—a period during which I have been surrounded by friends, many of them warm ones——

His lordship then paused, visibly much affected.

without exception; many of them are now no more; some of them, nay many of them I see at this moment around me. This retirement from the active scenes in which I have been so long engaged, and which have become as it were incorporated with my life, I cannot help feeling, and feeling deeply. It has, however, in some degree been alleviated by the prospect of the repose which is probably better suited to this period of my life, and which perhaps would have earlier induced me to retire but for events of a particular description which have latterly occurred; but independent of this I must say, that any pain I would have felt has been more than alleviated by the kind and affectionate address which has been offered to me by my friend Serjeant Greene, and which has been so cordially assented to by the members of both professions.

I am not unconscious that in the discharge of those duties, my ability for which has been so overrated by my friend Serjeant Greene, I have been led into expressions of impatience which had been much better avoided. For any pain that I have given in doing so or any feelings that I have hurt I sincerely apologize, and I am grateful to the profession for not having attributed to inclination any such observations. And I must say, that whatever any such expressions may have been, they never have influenced me. It is a sentiment that I trust never will influence me; and I am now able to say, that in retiring from my profession I do not carry with me any other feeling than that of affectionate consideration for all and every member of the profession.

With respect to the particular circumstances which have occurred, and the particular succession which is about to take place in this court, it will become me to say very little. For the individual who is to occupy the situation I now fill I entertain the highest political and personal respect—no one can feel it more so—but I owe it as a duty to myself and the members of the Bar to state, that for the changes which are to take place I am not in the slightest degree answerable; I have no share in them, and have not, directly or indirectly, given them my sanction. In yielding my assent to the proposition which has been made for my retiring, I have been governed solely by its having been requested as a personal favour by a person to whom I owe so much, that a feeling of gratitude would have rendered it morally impossible that I could have done otherwise than resign.

When I look at the Bar before me, and especially the number of those who might have sat efficiently in this judicial place, I am bound to say, that for all those great ingredients which are calculated to enable them to

shine as practitioners, and as members of the Bar, or as gentlemen, for candour, for courtesy, knowledge, and ability—I challenge competition—I challenge the very distinguished Bars of either England or Scotland, and I do not fear that those I have the honour of addressing would suffer in the comparison. To them, for their repeated kindnesses I am deeply indebted. I do assure them that when I retire into quiet life, I will cherish in my heart the affectionate kindness and attention which I experienced at their hands.

Lord Plunket was deeply affected during the delivery of this parting address. At its conclusion he bowed to the Bar, and left the court, leaning upon the arm of his friend Sir Michael O'Loghlen, Master of the Rolls.

The profession with which he had been so long connected honoured him with a levée, the largest that had ever been witnessed in Ireland, nearly all the practising members of the profession waiting upon him at his mansion in Stephen's Green.*

After he left the bench, Lord Plunket withdrew himself wholly from politics. He at first spent some time on the Continent, lingering long at Rome, in whose venerable monuments his well-remembered classic lore caused him to take a deep interest; and when he returned to

* A handsome statue in white marble has been set up in the hall of the Four Courts, bearing on its pedestal the inscription, "Erected by the Bar of Ireland."

Ireland he settled at once at Old Connaught, where he passed the rest of his life, surrounded by his many children and grandchildren.

For several years after his retirement, his mind retained its perfect vigour, and with a few friends, who were old enough to remember the stirring events of his earlier career, he was fond of recurring to those times. It particularly pleased him too, to cap quotations from the great Greek and Latin authors with those who were fresh from school and college studies: a competition in which he was always successful. Gradually, however, the weight of nearly ninety years began to press heavily upon him, and the complete change from habits of busy life to those of total idleness told upon his mind, so that his last days were spent in a sad intellectual lethargy, and death came to him with a merciful release.

Lord Plunket died on the 4th day of January, 1854, in his ninetieth year, and was buried in Mount Jerome Cemetery, near Dublin.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX I.

Mr. Bushe's Speech in the Irish House of Commons, January 16th, 1800.

This speech is such a good specimen of what has been called "Irish eloquence" in its best form, and is so little known, that I hope I shall be excused for introducing here some considerable extracts from it. I am not aware that it has been published at length anywhere, except in an old pamphlet,* printed in 1800. The reader will perhaps, in criticising the style, say that it is too smooth for the purposes of striking effect—the antitheses too evenly balanced. This was not so much the result of elaborate preparation as the peculiar gift of the speaker, for even in his latest days the conversation of the old Chief Justice was full of pointed epigram, relieved continually by flashes of humour, the brighest, but always playful; and if

* *Report of the Debate, &c., on the 15th and 16th of January*, 1800. Printed by the A. Edwards and W. H. Creagh, Cork, 1800.

the composition of this oration seems too polished for the purposes of the orator, it must be remembered that it gained all necessary force from an energy of delivery, and a noble presence that gave to the appearance of the speaker, as Sheil expressed it, a "rhetorical heroism," and made him the best *Nisi prius* advocate in Ireland. John Kemble, who was his intimate friend, said of him, that he was at that day "*the greatest actor off the stage.*"

Mr. Bushe spoke in reply to the Attorney-General, who had concluded an elaborate attempt to identify the cause of the anti-Unionists with that of the United Irishmen, in these words :—

Who ought to be the natural enemies to the Union? and who are the real enemies of it? The traitors, the democrats at home, and our ferocious enemies abroad, who are at this moment anxiously waiting for our determination upon this subject, and who are at all times watchful to take advantage of dissension to effectuate our destruction. If you doubt it, look to the proclamations of Humbert, when lately at Castlebar, at the head of the rebels and invaders, in which, after giving some wholesome regulations for the raising of insurrection and invitations to plunder, he desires that the Irish assembly may be convened to establish the revolution. He says he is come to break the yoke of British connection—"I come to assist to reconquer the property of your ancestors, but I beseech you *to spare the opposition.*"

Mr. Bushe said :—

I rise, Sir, to protest against the illiberal and false insinuations which I have heard this night from the

Treasury Bench, and against the base attempt to identify opposition to the parricidal measure of a legislative union with disaffection to my sovereign. It is the abominable and scandalous expedient of a rotten cause; the desperate resource of those that have not an argument to support them. I know not what the noble lord means by the liberality with which he has dealt out the epithet of traitor, or what he would insinuate when he talks of communicating upon politics with rebels who have fallen under the sword of the law. I assure the noble lord, the insinuation does not apply to me. I have not exiled political connexions in Scotland, nor does Fort St. George contain any confidant of my early politics. I know not what the Right Honourable the Attorney-General means by his attack upon the Whig Club. I had not the honour to belong to that society, though I respect their principles; but as his friend, the noble lord, was once a distinguished member of that association, I must entreat of him to profect its character against the accusation of the Attorney-General. I have no interest in the exculpation, which I cannot put into better hands than the noble lord's; I therefore commit myself to my noble advocate, and request he may consolidate our two defences into one. It is a sorry and illiberal return for the loyalty of the Irish gentry to plunder them of that Constitution which their loyalty defended, and it is no small aggravation of that illiberality to slander their characters. It is not the vituperation of the Attorney-General that can make me forget that I have the honour of co-operating in this cause with the characters in this kingdom the most distinguished for loyalty and affection to their sovereign, nor shall his frequent and indecent applications of the word traitor make me forget what a traitor is. A traitor, in my mind, sir, is a wretch, who upon the pretence of some visionary and experimental improvement, but really upon the suggestion of some private motive of corruption, would sell the Constitution and liberty of his own

country, in order to aggrandise the ambition of another. A traitor is one, who, perhaps contrary to his own declared opinions in private, would in an hour prostrate a Constitution, the collected wisdom of ages, at the feet of any other power that could aspire to it, or bribe him.

I strip this formidable measure of all its pretences and its aggravations. I look at it nakedly and abstractedly, and I see in it but one question—*Will you give up your country?* I forget for a moment the unprincipled means by which it has been promoted; I pass by for a moment the unseasonable time at which it has been introduced, and the contempt of Parliament upon which it is bottomed, and I look on it simply as England reclaiming, in the moment of your weakness, that dominion which you extorted from her in a moment of your virtue—a dominion which she uniformly abused, which invariably oppressed and impoverished you, and from the cessation of which you date all your prosperity. It is a measure which goes to degrade the country by saying that it is incapable to govern itself, and to stultify the Parliament by saying that it is incapable of governing the country. It is a revival of the odious and absurd title of conquest; it is the renewal of the abominable distinction between mother-country and colony which lost America; it is a denial of the rights of nature to a great nation from an intolerance of its prosperity. No man would be so frantic as to state, as an abstract proposition, that Ireland is physically disfranchised from the common privileges of nations. If you stated to a native of a foreign nation that a country containing a population of nearly five millions of inhabitants, and a territory of nearly twenty-one millions of English acres, inhabited by a brave and generous people, blest by nature with a fertile soil, and every aptitude for commercial prosperity and domestic wealth, was physically incapable of governing itself, that foreigner would laugh at you. If you stated that a country containing a metropolis at least the fourth city

in Europe, exceeding in numbers the populations of two capitals of his Majesty's imperial allies the Emperors of Russia and Germany, was doomed by nature to provincial inferiority, and was radically disqualified from governing itself, you would pronounce a libel upon a bountiful Providence, and a libel that would not be endured.

What title, then, do you make to the dependence of Ireland? I tremble at the dreadful alternative which this question suggests; I warn you against the consequences of answering me that the imperial relation with Great Britain is in the cause of it, and I caution the Treasury Bench against propounding the formidable and alarming doctrine, that British connection is inconsistent with Irish independence. I have ever looked upon British connection with fond veneration as a polar principle in politics, by which every loyal Irishman should steer his opinions. I have always felt it to be a sacred truth, which it would be profane to deny, and almost profane to examine; but this formidable and desperate project tears away the veil in which I have shrouded its sanctity, and compels us to balance liberty against connection, and proposes this monstrous and delicate investigation: whether it be of the essence of our connection with Great Britain that we cannot be free. God forbid that such loose and dangerous speculations were set afloat, and that the first and best principles of politics in this island were to be thus unfixed and shaken to their foundations. I hold it that Irish independence is not only consistent with English connection, but necessary to it. I therefore caution the Minister to beware how he shakes the strongest pillars of the empire, to beware how he tampers with, how he neutralizes or alienates the first sentiment in the bosom of every loyal Irishman—that sentiment active as his life and warm as his heart's blood—*to stand and fall with Great Britain*—that sentiment paramount to every consideration but one, and secondary to nothing but a devotion to the independence of Ireland. Depend upon it, sir, there is no second modification of that con-

nection which will ever be submitted to—no other will be borne than the connection of the Crown and the independence of the Parliaments.

You are called upon to give up your independence! And to whom are you to give it up? To a nation which for six hundred years has treated you with uniform oppression and injustice. The Treasury bench startles at this assertion—"*non meus hic sermo est.*" If the Treasury bench scold me, Mr. Pitt will scold them—it is his assertion in so many words in his speech. Ireland, says he, has been always treated with injustice and illiberality. Ireland, says Junius, has been uniformly plundered and oppressed. This is not the slander of Junius, or the candour of Mr. Pitt—it is history. For centuries have the British nation and Parliament kept you down, shackled your commerce, paralysed your exertions, despised your character, and ridiculed your pretensions to any privileges commercial or constitutional. She never conceded a point to you—a point which she could avoid—or granted a favour which was not reluctantly distilled; they have been all wrung from her like drops of her heart's blood; and you are not in possession of a single blessing, except those which you derive from God, that has not been either purchased or extorted by the virtue of your own Parliament from the illiberality of England. Is the interval from the year 1779 to the year 1782 forgotten? How did you obtain your Mutiny Bill, your Octennial Bill, the repeal of Poyning's law, the independence of your judges, the restoration of the appellate jurisdiction, your free trade, and finally your free Constitution? An honourable gentleman (Mr. Martin) has argued elaborately that all these were not obtained by the Irish Parliament, or grudged by the English, but were the mere spontaneous effusion of Royal bounty—a boon not merely conceded to, but almost inflicted by his Majesty upon the reluctance of the Irish Parliament. Why, sir, I was obliged just now to trouble Mr. Pitt to confute the Irish Treasury bench,

and I must now request of Lord Minto to confute the honourable gentleman. I presume not to set up my assertion against the honourable gentleman's; but surely he will not refuse to believe the authority of that disinterested and philanthropic nobleman, who has condescended to illuminate the understandings of the Irish nation, and whose authority is so undeniably accredited by the gratuitous circulation of his speech at the expense of the Irish administration? That noble metaphysician tells you expressly that all those favours were extorted from England at a moment when England was in *duress*. *Duress* is his word; his lordship seems to have a smattering of forensic phrases, and to have put together a little Scotch law, with a little Dutch logic, which, mixed with a good deal of lofty English, has recommended his work to the British Cabinet, because he has had the modesty to *write down* the liberties and characters of Ireland; with, however, the sound discretion of writing those down in another country. . . . What then is the result of these authorities compared together? It is this—dominion over Ireland is the legal inheritance of England. Mr Pitt did not cite the injustice of England as a proof of his penitence, but as the title-deed of her power and the monument of her claim. That power, that inheritance, was fraudulently conveyed away by duress, in the year 1782; and the Irish Parliament is now called upon as a great court of equity to rip up the fraud and set aside the transaction.

After an able analysis of the history of English rule in Ireland, he continues :—

What is the meaning of that argument which says while her power was qualified, her treatment of you has been oppressive, but when it becomes absolute her conduct will be generous? What reasoning is that which calls upon you to surrender an institution which

has procured you everything, and submit to a country which has denied you everything? Will any one believe that all that was because you had a Parliament, and that too a Parliament so shackled by Poyning's law and the 6 of Geo. I., that it was merely nominal; and that the moment you cease to have a Parliament, a golden age of justice and liberality is to succeed? This argument is beyond my comprehension, and yet how has Ireland advanced and improved even under all these discouraging circumstances? In a hundred years her population has increased near three millons and a half; the face of the country has changed; this majestic city has risen in the midst of it; Ireland has sprung and vegetated under the foot that trampled her; her physical energies could not be kept down. Compression seems to have given vigour to the efforts which she made to recover her natural dimensions, and at last she burst from her confinement, and became herself in the year 1782. This has been the result of the gradual but constant victories obtained by a resident Parliament over the prejudices of a foreign one, and since 1782 the progress has not been gradual but rapid. Shall then the stationary prosperity or slow advances of Scotland in seventy or eighty years be attributed to nothing but her Union, and shall the race of Ireland to improvement in seventeen short years be attributed to everything but her independence? What Ireland might be now if she had been differently treated is a picture for the fancy. Had her Constitution not been fettered—had her commerce not been crippled—had her character been respected, what would she have been at this day? An Irish imagination dwells on the speculation with fond conjecture; but how does the picture exhibit itself to an English fancy? Ireland, says the Castle manifesto, might have grown too great to be governed. Ireland, say the arguments of this night, has in her greatness a tendency to separation. Base, ungrateful, cowardly slander! It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, as if the

principles of Irish directory, as appearing upon the report of thesecret committee, had been gotten by heart and committed to memory for the speeches of this night. This is one of the topics of that directory; the answer of one of those unfortunate men now in exile is that Ireland *has outgrown her connection with England.* The Castle takes up the text and preaches upon it, and we hear that Ireland may grow too great to be governed. Amiable and candid consistency of argument! that in one breath states the Union to be the means of making us great, happy, and powerful; and in the other says we are to be made greater than we are for fear we should grow too great to be governed. But is there in Ireland's greatness that tendency to separation? Let your memories refute the calumny. What was the case in 1782? England was prostrate, or to use Lord Minto's technical phrase, in *duress.* Ireland, was as far as depended upon England, defenceless; as far as depended upon herself, invincible. There were scarcely regular troops enough in the country to mount the Castle guard —80,000 men bristled in arms. Invasion was threatened and averted; the British star seemed to have set; the Empire was dismembered; America had been dissevered; Lord Cornwallis's sword was left in the care of General Washington; the combined fleets swept the Channel and frowned upon the coast: and what was the conduct of Ireland? Separation? Oh no!. An acclaiming people cheered a loyal Parliament, and the sentiment of standing or falling with Great Britain echoed from one end of the island to the other. What was the case of the year 1798? No one can forget that day. The contagion of French principles which had spared no part of Europe and no part of this Empire, reached Ireland. The Republican faction meditated separation. The resident Parliament investigated the conspiracy, and armed the executive with vigorous authority, and in a few weeks 40,000 men rose in arms at the call of British connection. The zeal ran so high,

and the spirit was so buoyant, that Parliament was obliged to check its exuberance, and a motion of the hon. bart. who moved this amendment (Sir Laurence Parsons) for an increase of the yeomanry was resisted and negatived. All ranks, all professions, all ages, thronged to the standard, and the rebellion was put down. While England has run the race of dominion, Ireland has run the race of connection. I trust she may never retrace her steps. Was separation then, in 1798, the tendency of the Irish gentry, and is it for that that an Irish Parliament cannot be suffered to exist? Was it for separation that the dangers and fatigues of a military life were embraced and courted? Was it for separation that the merchant left his counting-house, and the student his college, for the camp? Was it for separation that the youth of the University sprung to arms with the ingenuous ardour of the young heart, and that the spring-bud of the nation put forth its eager and its tender head to brunt the storm? Oh no! The country was saved because there was a standard erected in it round which the Irish gentry loved to rally, and that standard was British connection.

What is it we are called upon to give up? I speak not of national pride or dignity, I declaim not on theoretical advantages; but I tell you that you are called upon to give up that municipal Parliament which has procured you, within the memory of you all, municipal advantages which no foreign Parliament can supply. We hear of nothing but imperial topics. Good God! is the Parliament nothing but an instrument of taxation? Is nothing understood of an house of Commons but that it is an engine for raising money out of the pocket of the subject and throwing it into the coffers of the Crown? Take up any volume of your statutes upon that table and you will find the municipal acts of Parliament in the proportion of more than forty to one to the imperial: what has within the memory of many now alive changed the face of your land? What has

covered a country of pasture with tillage? What has intersected an impassable country with roads? What has nearly connected by inland navigation the Eastern Channel with the Western Ocean? A resident Parliament. This is not theory—look at your statutes and your journals, and there is not one of those improvements that you cannot trace to some document dictated by your own public spirit and now upon that table, and to no other course or cause under Heaven. Can this be supplied in Westminster?

. . . . . .

We are not always sure of such constituted authorities as we are blessed with at present. Perhaps at some future day the departments of the executive Government may be very differently filled. If we were always to have a lord-lieutenant distinguished for a strict adherence to the principles of the Constitution, and abhorring, like his present Excellency, the monstrous usurpations of military law—a resident Parliament for the purposes of control might be very unnecessary. If we were always sure of a secretary, like the noble lord, of purer eyes than to behold corruption, and who would abhor the idea of packing a Parliament or degrading a people, a resident Parliament for the purposes of control might be very unnecessary. If we were sure that the law officers of the Crown were always to be, as now they are, men of eminent professional character and high integrity, no such control might be necessary. But men are mortal, and events are uncertain. Perhaps at some future day the various departments of the State may be filled with men selected for corruption and incapacity; and if that were to be the case, I ask you where would be the protection for the life or liberty of any honest man too proud to bend his knee to the provincial despot? Believe me, an iron military Government must succeed to your present constitution: the idea of a paltry provincial grievance, if the judicature, the army, or the revenue runs riot, preferred before a distant and fastidious imperial Parliament, excites ridicule.

The Government of this country must become the worst kind of absolute monarchy—*a provincial monarchy*. In this point of view let England beware of the formidable precedent of five millions of men governed by uncontrolled power. It is a formidable precedent. In this reign the influence of the Crown has made sufficient encroachments upon the liberty of the subject. Two Parliaments in one empire have not been found too many bulwarks for the Constitution, and if the liberty of Ireland sinks, let England beware of the vortex in which her own may be absorbed.

But the Constitution we are to surrender, it is asserted, is a mere visionary independence; that we are, in fact, actually dependent upon England; that her counsels influence our Parliament, and that such influence has encroached upon our Constitution until nothing is left of it but a name. The new squeamish reformists of the Treasury Bench cry "faugh" upon the abomination of the Irish Parliament. Their pure and incorruptible virtue cannot bear the prospect of such corruption, and that they may not see it they plunge into the midst of it; they are Platonists in politics; the gross sensualities of the connection disgust them, but the pure and spiritual indulgences of the union delight. Their romantic virtue emulates the Roman fame, and the Irish Curtius dashes at the gulf, and would rather let the Castle close upon himself than upon his country. I own I always suspect this furious virtue; the morals of prudery are always problematical. When I see this pliable patriotism declaiming with surly indignation to-day, and cringing with supple adulation to-morrow —in the morning Diogenes growling in his tub, in the evening Aristophanes fawning in the antechamber; I always suspect there is something behind the curtain more than meets the eye. I would ask some one of those enlarged and liberal politicians whether he thinks that the simple executive government which is to be left in Ireland will be an improvement on our situa-

tion, and whether he knows of no method of reforming the Parliament except by annihilating it? The noble lord may instruct him by retracing the speculation of his youthful days, and supply him with some of those plans of reform which would not have cost him half so much trouble to carry as the extinction of the Parliament. But what is to be the transfiguration of this Parliament which is to glorify it; and how is corruption to put on incorruption? It is sentenced to death. In Ireland it is to suffer the death of a felon; but its resurrection in Westminster, in the midst of angel purity and immaculate innocence, is, it seems, to compensate the loss of its existence, and cancel the immoralities of its life. Alas! sir, have these high priests of the new dispensation revealed the truth to us as to this paradise of Westminster? Do they know the British Parliament who thus speak? Do they think there is there no borough patronage or borough representation? Do they suppose there are there no placemen? Do they conceive it to be a Pool of Bethesda, in which our impurities are to be cleansed? Do they forget that this immaculate Parliament not more than twenty years ago, declared by a vote that the influence of the Crown had increased amongst them, was increasing, and ought to be diminished? Do they forget that the present Prime Minister declared eighteen years ago that unless that assembly was radically reformed the empire was lost? Do they know that it has never been reformed since, and do they think that one hundred Irish transplantations will reform it? Have they ever considered that there ministerial influence predominates so effectually that the Opposition has seceded in despair? Have they ever visited this exhibition of pure representation? Have they ever looked at Mr. Pitt governing that assembly with his nod, and scarcely concealing his own actual despotism within the forms of the Constitution? Can it escape observation that the very same men who allege the actual corruption of Parliament as the reason for

extinguishing it, also allege its possible virtue and its recent virtue as another argument from whence to infer the same conclusion. . . . But, sir, I request to know what are we to get for our Parliament? This is what no man yet knows. Everything is to be taken upon the faith of the noble lord, whose promises are veiled in oracular ambiguity. I observe the Treasury Bench cry "hear him." I perceive their triumph upon this observation. I perceive that I am considered absurd for objecting to what I profess not to know. This is very intelligible, and I am very absurd in voting against annihilating the Irish Parliament before I know upon what terms it is to be annihilated. The noble lord considers that it would be much more decent and rational first to consent to its extinction, and then to inquire the price. He will pardon me for differing from him; for I will suppose for a moment that I know his terms, that all his metaphors and indefinite metaphysics, his consolidation and identification, are reduced into common English, and I will admit that they are the most favourable, the most brilliant that the most ardent imagination can conceive,

Or youthful poets fancy, when they love,

and I ask what is the security for their performance? I may be told the articles of Union and the faith of nations—I hold a contract where one of the contracting parties covenants that he will cease to exist to be an absurdity: when individuals contract with each other, the contract binds them and those who survive them; but who is the executor of a Parliament?—who is to compel performance when this House is no more?—National security—a rotten security at the best, but English faith the rottenest of all—Punic Faith. What! Britain talk of her faith in the very moment that she violates the compact of 1782. If ever there was a solemn "league and covenant" between nations the settlement of 1782 is that transaction.

Another provoking and absurd pretence for this ruinous measure is, that it is for ever to extinguish and *obliterate religious feuds.* Could this be satisfactorily proved to me I should be the Union's firmest friend: *I lament—I abhor—I loathe religious distinctions;* they have been the only source of misfortune in this country; and to accommodate and to terminate the mischiefs which have sprung from them will require, and I hope will meet, the utmost wisdom and the deepest consideration of Parliament. But for God's sake how is a Union to do this? One right hon. gentleman (Mr. LaTouche) argues that nothing else can extinguish Catholic claims —another hon. gentleman (Mr. Martin) that in no other case can the Catholic claims be gratified! Which am I to believe? How is a Union to do either? How is it to do both? Will any liberal Catholic consider himself exalted merely because his Protestant fellow-subject is depressed, or will the Protestant gentry of Ireland consent that in order to leave nothing for the Catholic to demand there shall be nothing left for themselves to enjoy? Upon this subject my own sentiments are fixed; I never had a second opinion: I have ever considered the classification of mankind by sects and the exclusion from political privileges on account of religious opinions as unphilosophical, impolitic, immoral, and unchristian; I have ever considered that the application of the principle to Ireland has been injurious and destructive; if I ever had doubted it before I could no longer have doubted it now, for of this I am certain, that the degrading and insolent project now under consideration could never have been proposed to any but to a *divided* people. The idea of a Protestant garrison in a Catholic country, has always revolted my understanding and disgusted my feelings; and while the Catholic remained unemancipated, I have considered the liberty of the Protestant, like the liberty of a gaoler, who can walk abroad when he turns the key on his prisoner, but who lives in gaol. Sir, while I thus profess my

adherence and devotion to the principles of universal toleration and Catholic emancipation, I do not forget that some of the most respectable and honourable men at both sides of the House entertain different sentiments. But who is to arbitrate between these different opinions? Is it the Irish Parliament who know the country, who are acquainted with its local interests and feelings, who, if it be necessary to emancipate, know the season and the degree in which it may be done; and if it be necessary to uphold the established religion in its exclusive privileges, know how and when to do it; or is this delicate momentous complicated concern to be delegated to the guardianship of Lord Minto, who makes title to govern the country by professing that he knows nothing about it? If we are to embrace and emancipate our Catholic brethren shall it be said that the Irish Parliament, which has already relaxed the penal laws till scarcely any remain, is incapable of that liberality? And if it be necessary to reject and refuse the Catholic claims, who is it that will tell the Protestant gentry here assembled in Parliament that they are incompetent to protect themselves? No! a Union is not necessary to do either; but if it be in contemplation to inflame the two sects against each other for the purpose of common subjugation; if some little dirty underhand bargain is to be driven with the Catholic clergy; if the Protestant interest is to be sold to the Catholic, or the Catholic to the Protestant; if inconsistent promises are to be held out to each in order to deal out impartial treachery to both; then indeed there may be some connection between the two ideas; and as the rebellion has become an argument for the Union because it has weakened us, so religion becomes an argument for the Union because it has divided us.

Let me adjure the noble lord to weigh well and consider deeply the probable permanency of a measure so conducted; let me implore him to avail himself of the passing experience of his own days and of the

instructions which history may afford him, when he sees volcanic revolutions desolating the face of the political world, the first elementary principles of society loosening and dissolving, and empires not built upon the liberties of the people crumbling into dust. Let him contemplate the awful change which he sees and consider the dreadful responsibility which he incurs to his sovereign by exchanging the affections of a loyal nation for the reluctant obedience of a degraded province. Let him look for the permanency of this transaction something further than to the vote of the night or the job of the morning, and let him have some better document than his army-list for the affections of the people; let him consider whether posterity will validate this act if they believe that the constitution of their ancestors was plundered by force, or was filched by practice. Let him, before it be too late, seriously ponder whether posterity will validate this act if they believe that the basest corruption and artifice were exerted to promote it. That all the worst passions of the human heart were enlisted into the service, and all the most depraved ingenuity of the human intellect tortured to devise new contrivances of fraud. I do not state those things have been, I state hypothetically, and ask, if posterity believe such things, will they validate the transaction? If they believe that there was foul play from the first moment to the last, both within doors and without, that the rabble were appealed to from the Parliament and debauched or intimidated to petition against the constitution of their country; if they believe that in Parliament the disgust of the measure, notwithstanding a proscription, which made office incompatible with honour, stained the Treasury Bench; that the disgust of the measure broke asunder and dissociated some of the tenderest and most delicate connections of human life; that the nominal office of escheator of Munster became an office of dishonourable competition, and after the Parliament was thus reduced,

that the Irish Commons were recruited from the English staff. If they were to believe those things, and that human frailty and human necessities were so practised on that the private sentiments and public conduct of several could not be reconciled, and that where the Minister could influence twenty votes, he could not command one "*Hear him!*"—I say not that these things are so, but I ask you, if your posterity believe them to be so, will posterity validate this transaction, or will they feel themselves bound to do so? I answer, where a transaction, though fortified by sevenfold form, is radically fraudulent, that all the forms and solemnities of law are but so many badges of the fraud, and posterity, like a great court of conscience, will pronounce its judgment. Let me not be misunderstood. I am sure I shall be misrepresented. Odious as this measure is in my eyes, and disgusting to my feelings, if I see it carried by the free and uninfluenced sense of the Irish Parliament, I shall not only defer and submit, but I will cheerfully obey. It will be the first duty of every good subject, but fraud and oppression and unconstitutional practice may possibly be another question. If this be factious language, Lord Somers was factious, the founders of the Revolution were factious, William the Third was an usurper, and the Revolution was a rebellion. For what did James the Second lose his crown? Can the case of the Seven Bishops be compared to the case of Ireland? I shall not draw the parallel.

I have too long troubled you, but before I sit down let me for once conjure this house, whether this be a transaction altogether upon which they are willing to commit themselves, their properties, their characters, and their children—let me conjure them to weigh that question well. If private honour and public virtue be not a name, and if every generous feeling be not banished from amongst us, where is that spirit which in the year 1782 swelled the crest and glorified the character of the

Irish gentry ; which achieved liberty for yourselves, and extorted justice from England and admiration from Europe ? Is it fled and extinguished for ever ? I will not believe it,—but were every appeal to everything human fruitless and vain, I would invoke that Providence which even in my short life has so often stretched His protecting arm over my country. In my short life my country from a province has become a nation—has been protected from a bloody rebellion and a formidable invasion, and has seen one desperate attempt against her liberties and constitution frustrated and overthrown. I will rely upon God to save my country.

APPENDIX II.

SINCE the foregoing pages were sent to the printer the following speeches have accidentally come into my hands: they are those for which, as I have already mentioned, medals were awarded to Mr. Plunket, in the Historical Society. These speeches appear to me remarkable as the efforts of a young man of nineteen; and I think they will be found interesting by every student of eloquence as evidences and illustrations of the careful study and accurate preparation by which Mr. Plunket improved the great oratorical gifts bestowed upon him by nature.

Eulogium on DR. WILLIAM CLEGHORN.

Pronounced in the Historical Society, T.C.D., on Wednesday, June 4th, 1783, and honoured by them with an extraordinary medal.

GENTLEMEN,

Most highly honoured do I conceive myself by the privilege of addressing you on the present melancholy occasion. It allows me to annex my own name to one which has been so much regarded by you; 'tis a mark that you consider me as having been the friend of Dr. William Cleghorn, as a sharer in that esteem which was the source of honour as well as happiness to every one

who partook of it. Might the zeal of friendship supply the place of eloquence, could my words convey to you even a faint idea of those sensations with which my heart is filled, the abilities which once adorned this society should meet their just tribute of admiration, the virtues which so strongly conciliated our regard should be praised as they were respected, and lamented as they were esteemed. But ill the flowing language of eloquence suits with genuine and unaffected sorrow; ill am I qualified to praise the virtues which I loved, or in finished periods to lament the loss which I so sensibly feel. But let me raise myself above the selfish feelings of private sorrow, and sorrow with society at large for the loss of one of her brightest ornaments. As a public character he is to be regretted, as the most rising in a profession which he was so fitted to adorn, as the much admired professor of a science which looked up to him for improvement, which his abilities and his humanity equally qualified him to excel in; which at once afforded matters to employ his philosophic genius, and gratified his desire to relieve the distresses of his fellow-creatures. His abilities had here a sufficient sphere for exertion; the qualities of a mind by nature so highly endowed and so attentively cultivated by study had here obtained a scene on which they might display themselves in full perfection. He was now in that situation where respect and honour were to be acquired, not merely for himself, but to be reflected on the country in which he lived; a country which, though by birth he was a stranger to it, his congenial and sympathetic feeling had taught him to consider as his native one. That abilities like these should be extinguished at the very moment when their lustre began to display itself, that the exertions of these abilities should be stifled in their birth, as friends to philosophy, as men, we must lament; but when the qualities of his heart are considered, when to the talents which were so fitted to adorn and to instruct society we add the manners which were so well adapted to humanize

and engage them, the distress becomes doubly aggravated. We here lament the engaging companion, the sympathizing friend, the sincere yet unassuming monitor. On these would I more willingly expatiate; the praise of these, could he now hear me, would be more grateful to his feelings. In him, by a happy and uncommon union, the abilities which commanded our admiration and respect were accompanied by a steadiness of principle and benevolence of heart which challenged our affection and regard. In him philosophy and virtue went hand in hand, and assumed their most winning forms. Without the supercilious brow of the cloistered pedant, or the forbidding air of the self-denying devotee, he possessed all the learning of the one and the integrity of the other. He made learning and religion appear with their genuine aspect—affable, cheerful, engaging. When we conversed with him we wished to be virtuous and wise, because we wished like him to be amiable. So happily did his modesty conceal his superiority, that his virtues, though they were admired by all, were neither envied nor detracted from. But 'twas not that bashful simplicity which confounds the learned with the ignorant, and renders useless the talents which it hides; 'twas a conscious dignity, tempered by an unassuming gentleness, which made him, not conceal, but seem unconscious of his merits; which made his superior virtues cease to be dazzling without obscuring their lustre. You wished to adopt his sentiments because he made them seem to be your own. The tongue of Slander herself could not refuse to acknowledge those qualities which he appeared not to know that he possessed. That mind must have been indeed depraved which could be capable of knowing him and being his enemy; for surely never did a more diffusive spirit of philanthropy exist in any bosom than in his. His gentle spirit knew not how to give offence. There was an air of good-natured sincerity in everything he said, which, from the first moment you conversed with him, made you wish to be his

friend. He possessed an open simplicity and ingenuous candour, which disarmed suspicion, which compelled you to love and to regard him. But with him to be sincere was to be polite; for to be known was to be esteemed. Reserve was unnecessary to that bosom whose every feeling did it honour, which might expand its guiltless volume to the world, and stand the scrutiny without a blush. The mind which is conscious to itself of what it dare not disclose may fly for protection to the congenial gloom of mysterious secrecy, but here it would have only served to throw a shade over those virtues, which the more fully they were observed must have more strongly attracted our admiration. The veil of secrecy might here have concealed a beauty: it could not cover a defect.

When virtues like these are withdrawn from society, when a heart endowed with these social and beneficent qualities is called away to the enjoyment of that heaven which its benign and happy feelings had anticipated on earth, it leaves a blank which may not easily be filled. We may in vain cast the inquiring eye around us; we may survey the societies of the learned and the circles of the good, and return from the unavailing search to shed tears of heartfelt sorrow over the united friend and instructor whom we have lost. But if as members of the community we feel ourselves affected, if we lament him as men and as fellow-citizens, how much more peculiarly are we called on as members of this society to pay our tribute of sorrow and praise to the virtues by whose cultivation we were honoured. 'Tis true he had long gone from amongst us to busier scenes and more important associations, but yet we still conceived that the abilities which had first dawned amongst us imparted to us a share of their meridian splendour. 'Twas here that he had first winged his youthful flights; 'twas here he first received the praises and rewards which presaged his maturer honours; his exertions in this University had early ranked him foremost of those

who ran the course of academic fame; but 'twas here that the latent seeds of merit met their proper culture, and amongst us were they brought into view. The fair flowers which genius had given birth to and learning had matured were suffered not "to blush unseen;" every virtue, every talent met a friend to cherish and an object to employ it. Nor were your favours bestowed on one who disregarded them. Ingratitude was a weed too rank to exist in such a soil; he acknowledged he felt them. Allow me to repeat to you a few words from one of his excellent speeches which stands recorded on your journals. "I was," said he, "a stranger in this kingdom, unknown, unconnected; in this society I found a body of men, many of whom I had reason to love, all of whom I had reason to esteem. From them I chose my friends—my companions; from them I experienced mutual friendship—accumulated favours. Pardon me if the reflection overwhelms me and prevents my utterance."

These were the last words which he spoke in this society. You see in them the dictates of a mind oppressed with gratitude, labouring under sensations too big for utterance. The orator still bespoke the man; his eloquence was like his manners, gentle, persuasive, insinuating; as unassuming as 'twas dignified, it convinced the understanding whilst it captivated the heart. The most favoured was he of our sons: yet he now lies in the silent grave. No longer shall his persuasive accents spread conviction amongst us, nor again shall we behold the united object of our pride and our esteem. How uncertain is the state of humanity! its objects how elusive! how transitory its possessions! Hither ye sons of eloquence, turn your eyes. Hither ye who exult in the splendour of your abilities, ye who flutter in the sunshine of universal admiration, direct your views. But a day, and Cleghorn was; but a day, and who like him was admired — respected? Yet he is now no more. Snatched from amongst us whilst his grateful accents

are yet vibrating in our ears, whilst our hearts are yet throbbing with the responsive emotions of affection and esteem; which of you more than him can be admired, which of you as him beloved—revered? Abilities are bestowed on many, but the qualities which sweeten society are far more rarely distributed. The glare of splendid talents may flash incessant before our eyes, but the genial beam which warms while it illumines, the manners which attract and the virtues which confirm our friendship, are granted but to a chosen few. The admiration of society ye may command, universal applause may attend your words, but happy the few who like him shall be esteemed—like him regretted. Could abilities, virtue, humanity, every gentle, every engaging quality,—could the universal wish of society avert the stroke of death,—he had been immortal; but the debt of nature must be paid. He was taken away whilst every faculty was yet in its bloom, whilst his bosom was yet glowing with all the warmth of feeling which active virtue could inspire, ere the hand of time had impaired the vigour of his mind, or blunted the edge of youthful sensibility within him. But let us not arraign the dispositions of Providence. He had his share of happiness. In his life he was respected—beloved: the united tears of society accompanied him to his grave. The gracious Author of his existence will reward a life so conformed to his precepts. Let us bow in submissive silence, and learn to imitate the virtues we regard. For ourselves we may lament, but him we should congratulate and rejoice with. He is admitted to a happier world; he has passed to a more congenial clime. Yet still the selfish regretful tear will force its way;—accept it, gentle spirit! 'Tis the last involuntary tribute of sorrowing friendship,—'tis a tear which not the formal pageantry of ostentatious mourning has given birth to. 'Tis derived from a knowledge of thy virtues—from a heartfelt regret for thy loss!

Were my feelings on this occasion less sincere they might perhaps be more gracefully expressed; but his

virtues require not the pomp of words to set them off, nor need his merits any extraneous ornament in order to be regretted. They have a much firmer basis: they are deep rooted in the hearts, they are founded in the warm affection and esteem of all who knew him. To those who did not, were I to attempt to sum up his character in a word, I should say, he was one whom nature seemed to have shown to mankind as a proof that the philosopher may be the man of the world, and that they both receive their highest polish when guided by humanity and virtue.

Speech delivered from the chair of the Historical Society, on Wednesday, October, 1783, at the commencement of the fourteenth session.

GENTLEMEN:—

I should follow the example of most of the learned members who have preceded me in this station, and apologize for my inability to fill it, if I were equally exempt from any need of such a plea; but when I see that the authors of those apologies have always delivered their sentiments to you with a propriety and elegance which rendered every excuse unnecessary, I have been deterred from using a similar preface lest it should raise in you an expectation of similar consequences. A declaration of incapacity would in this case be like a veil to deformity; its having been usually the badge of modest beauty would heighten your disappointment on discovering what it concealed. And, indeed, gentlemen, though when I consider those who have gone before me in this office, and turn my eyes backward on myself, my own unworthiness stares me in the face, yet when I reflect that the present distinction is the gift of your friendship, not a debt to my merits, the consideration, whilst it gratifies me more highly than the most flattering compliment to my abilities, whilst it binds me to this Society by every tie of affection and gratitude,

inspires me at the same time with additional confidence in addressing you, because your friendship is the only favour which I can hope to requite. If my gratitude is all that I can offer, yet that I trust I can offer you with sincerity, and though ye do not in your chair this night behold an orator, yet I will be bold to say that ye shall hear the sentiments of one who by admiration of its principles, friendship for its members, and gratitude for the many and little-merited distinctions which it has bestowed on him, is as strongly, as warmly, attached to this Society as any who ever sat within its walls. I shall not detain you, gentlemen, with any further preface, I shall only say that when I reflect on the friendship which I have always experienced amongst you, I feel myself encouraged to hope that the same indulgent partiality which has raised me to this station, will pardon the errors which itself has rendered necessary.

'Tis customary for your chairman at the opening of the session to expatiate on the excellence of this institution. The subject is a rich one but not inexhaustible, and I confess I feel a strong reluctance to enter on a path where so many with firmer tread have gone before me, from which every flower has been already culled, and where not a beauty remains to be brought to view; ye will excuse me therefore if I say but little on a subject where everything new must be trivial and everything material trite. I shall not pretend to inform, I shall only remind you, of some of the advantages which may be derived from this institution. That ye *may* derive important benefits from an attendance on this Society, at the opening of your fourteenth session it would be needless in me to mention; they have been so sensibly experienced by you that ye cannot now doubt of their existence, and I trust that your conduct during this session will be such as to impress the reality of them still more deeply on your minds. Never indeed was any institution more happily adapted, either by the nature of its objects or its members, to promote every valuable

purpose: ye come into this Society cautiously selected from amidst the numerous students of a learned seminary: furnished by your situation in the University with the means of acquiring improvement, and supposed by your admission within these walls to have made a proper use of them. Ye will here by taking a part in the debate of the evening find occasions of displaying all the information ye may be already possessed of, whilst by listening to the sentiments of others and by attendance on history ye have an opportunity of furnishing yourselves with matter of a still richer and more interesting nature: some I know there are who puffed with academic pride, and exulting in the success of their college studies, conceive the measure both of their fame and information to be already so full that it could receive no addition from an attendance on us; who imagine that they already bear their honours so thick upon them that any laurels which we could bestow would be rather an incumbrance than an ornament. Such men might perhaps (accomplished as they deem themselves) receive an useful lesson in this Society; they might possibly learn that they are not of that exalted wisdom which they had modestly attributed to themselves; they may find by entering into our debates that they have yet room enough to contain a little modern learning; they may find that in considering a modern topic they may be perhaps as much benefited by the knowledge of a Hampden or a Russell as by the most intimate acquaintance with Brutus and the Gracchi; they may here possibly be pulled down from their height of self-created dignity,—and better here, than when they begin to mix with the world to find that their importance creates derision and their observations disgust,—that their learning is pedantry and their consequence is pride.

Amongst all the objects of your pursuit in this Society oratory seems especially to demand your attention. It holds a rank superior to, because it comprises all the others. This art, at once so pleasing and so com-

manding, is as attainable as it is necessary. Many have been discouraged from the cultivation of eloquence by an idea that their labours would be fruitless; that to be an orator requires abilities far above the common level. Perhaps there are but few who are capable of being finished orators; but I will venture to assert that there is no man of common understanding, and who does not labour under some natural impediment, who may not learn to deliver his sentiments in such a manner as will procure him respect and attention in any assembly. Surely to express plain truth in not ungraceful language is a task of no such mighty difficulty! A common understanding will supply the first, and the study and imitation of the best authors, joined to frequent practice, will infallibly acquire the last. Can any man then hesitate to devote some portion of his time to the cultivation of a study, a moderate skill in which may, with little pains, be attained, and a moderate skill in which is absolutely necessary? Let his position in life be what it will, whether he is destined to guard the interests of his country in the senate, to bustle in a busy profession, or to glide through life in the happy tranquillity of a private station, a fluency of expression and a manner not ungraceful are indispensably requisite. And where, give me leave to ask, can ye have a better opportunity of acquiring them than in this society, in the midst of a body of youthful friends ready to cherish every beauty, and to palliate every fault; breathing (if I may so speak) in an atmosphere of emulation, where, if you have not the dullest bosom, some kindred emotions must be excited in you? And furnished by that science from whence this institution derives its name, with the most copious materials to proceed on, what further encouragement can ye require? or what excuse can ye plead for not availing yourselves of such happy advantages? If thus supported and thus aided, ye do not acquire some confidence, some fluency, it requires no great sagacity to foresee that on the great stage of life ye will have but little pro-

bability of succeeding. Ye will there be in a very different situation: surrounded by persons rather disposed to detract from your excellences than to allow for your defects, where everything conspires to repress rather than to stimulate, where loquacity passes for good sense, where self-assured ignorance bears off the prize, and leaves modest merit to lament in silence. So situated, will ye ever, think ye, be able to divest yourselves of your Pythagorean habits? or if, compelled to speak, ye at length break forth from your long-encouraged silence, will your exertions probably be received with applause? When I say that every man amongst you may make himself an orator, I would be understood to mean this only in a certain degree. I would be understood to mean only that every man may so qualify himself as to be listened to on every occasion with attention and with pleasure. To reach perfection in the art must indeed require an uncommon share of talents, a judicious store of learning, an active, an unremitting diligence. To animate a nation, to moderate the fury of an incensed, or to rouse the sleeping passions of an indolent people,—these are the objects which call the powers of the finished orator into action, which require the collected experience of ages, the deepest knowledge of the secret springs and movements of the human heart,—a fancy, a genius to give life to the great mass of learning, to convince, to charm, to transport the hearers beyond themselves, and at the same time a coolness and sagacity to give their heated passions the proper bent, and to direct their agitated minds to the proper object. 'Twas this that hurried along the orator of Greece with that resistless vehemence which so long enabled him to withstand every effort, and to baffle every art of Macedonian force and Macedonian cunning. 'Twas this which lighted up the obscurity of him of Rome into that conflagration which has remained, with undiminished force and splendour, the admiration and astonishment of all succeeding ages,—that matchless

eloquence which could disarm the uplifted hand of vengeance, and like the calm light of an evening sun, subdue and smooth the unruly passions of the soul, and yet when occasion called, like the lightning of heaven, spread terror and amazement around it, and make the proud Triumvir tremble in the very zenith of his power. And *is* this whose invigorating influence has revived the drooping spirits of our native land, which, with *more effective* operation, has vindicated and restored our liberties, because the champions of our rights, free from the cautious accommodating spirit of the Roman orator, and above the cowardice or venality of him of Athens, regarded with equal indifference the offers and the menaces of corruption. Patriots as well as orators, ready to maintain in the field what they asserted in the senate, and seconded by a nation of heroes, determined that the breath with which they parted from their freedom should be the last gasp of their existence. The thunder of their eloquence struck a sense of terror, if not of virtue, into the breasts of the most unblushing supporters that ever arranged themselves in defence of a corrupt system, compelled them to deviate from their before undiverted course of submissive villany, and for once to strike into the untrodden path of freedom. I trust that under a conviction that these liberties are only to be preserved by the same spirit of independence which acquired, or rather vindicated them, ye will with unslackened ardour cultivate the glorious art by which alone that spirit of independence can be excited and maintained.

As the supporters of oratory, history and composition next claim your attention. History, that most liberal of instructors—the science of prudence without danger and experience without age—that unerring guide to virtue and to wisdom, that faithful mirror which exhibits the illustrious characters of antiquity passing in review before us, which teaches us at once to emulate their virtues and to share their faults, and thus to make our own the accumulated wisdom of ages. 'Tis this which

must form the orator; this is the only solid foundation on which he can build; without this, materials in every other respect the most excellent, and decorated with every Doric ornament, will form but an airy castle, a "baseless fabric;" without this the most plausible suggestions of a fruitful imagination, adorned with every grace which taste and fancy can bestow on them, will be but the specious nothings of a splendid emptiness; without this the orator or statesman, ignorant of the past, and therefore unjudging of the future, with a view only of the present object, will derange every other. 'Tis history only which can raise him to a commanding eminence from whence he may behold the kingdoms of the earth rising and setting in quick succession beneath him, from whence, resting on the past, he may direct his views to futurity, and thus learn to apply the experience collected from every age and every country to the advantage of that whose interests are his more immediate care. I should not have said even thus much on a subject which has been already managed by much abler hands and on which every gentleman's good sense will suggest to him reflections so much richer than I can pretend to offer, did not the almost universal neglect with which this study has been treated during our last session warrant me in supposing both that you had forgotten the exhortations of former chairmen and stifled the dictates of your own understandings. Would ye suffer yourselves to reflect but for a moment on the utility, the beauty, of History, surely ye could not slight her so unpardonably." . . .

The manuscript (which is his lordship's own) breaks off here.

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